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*THE
ATHANASIAN CREED
AND
MODERN THOUGHT*

GORMAN.



THE ATHANASIAN CREED

AND MODERN THOUGHT.

"I AM THAT I AM: . . . this is my NAME for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."—*Exod.* iii. 14, 15.

"Then opened HE their understanding, that they might understand THE SCRIPTURES, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached IN HIS NAME among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."—*St. Luke*, xxiv. 45, 46, 47.

" . . . *Toute la science intellectuelle et religieuse est renfermée dans cette grande parole de Saint Athanase: 'Comme l'âme rationnelle et la chair ne font qu'UN HOMME, de même le Dieu et l'homme ne font qu'UN JÉSUS CHRIST: sicut anima rationalis et caro UNUS EST HOMO, ita Deus et homo UNUS EST CHRISTUS.'*"—*Le Père Ventura de Raulica.*

THE
ATHANASIAN CREED
AND MODERN THOUGHT.

BY THE
REV. THOMAS MURRAY GORMAN, M.A.



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PREFACE.

AN attempt is made in the following pages to render the symbol of the Christian faith, called after the name of Athanasius, in some degree more intelligible and practical as a form of doctrine, by placing in as clear a light as possible what appears to be its genuine meaning and purport, and by directing special attention to what may be said to be its one cardinal principle, expressed in these words—"As the reasonable soul and flesh is ONE MAN: so God and man is ONE CHRIST."

The leading points of the exposition here presented, formed the subject of an afternoon discourse delivered in the Parish Church of St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, on Trinity Sunday, 1868; and again, in the present year, on the occasion of inaugurating a Sunday Morning Service in the Vestry Hall of the same Parish, previous to the taking down of the Old Church.

The method adopted on both occasions, of treating a most difficult and almost totally neglected part of our Divine Service, called forth numerous and unexpected expressions of cordial approval from in-

telligent and earnest-minded parishioners who happened to be present, and also a strongly expressed desire to see the discourse in print. The writer, for obvious reasons, hesitated as to the propriety of complying with this solicitation; but the perusal of a debate on the same subject, which recently took place in the Upper House of Convocation for the Province of Canterbury—a Report of which was published in the leading Church newspaper—removed at once all scruples in the matter. It was then, apparently for the first time, publicly declared by authority, that the *explanation of the Creed was an open question*.

The variety and character of the opinions expressed on that occasion are not a little remarkable, when the grave importance of the subject under consideration is duly taken into account. After a lengthened consultation, marked throughout by great candour, calmness, and moderation, the House arrived at no definite conclusion—contenting itself with the evidently sincere and hearty expression of a desire to see some explanation of the formula; or some plan for effecting the removal of the increasing difficulties, which are undoubtedly felt by a considerable number of both the clergy and the laity, on the question of retaining it as a portion of the Liturgy.

Objections to this ancient declaration of Christian belief are, it is to be feared, more widely entertained than expressed. There are many—and the number

is rapidly on the increase—who are in no way unfriendly to the National Church, and who are, moreover, deeply convinced of the truth of the primary doctrine which the Creed contains, so to say, as its kernel and life—the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are, nevertheless, perplexed by its difficult technical language, its rigid definiteness of expression, touching the most profound and mysterious of theological problems. They are, above all, painfully embarrassed by what they feel compelled to regard as the extreme exclusiveness and uncharitableness of its condemnatory clauses.

An undertaking like the present demands some explanation and apology. The best that can be offered seems to be, to present to the reader, by means of full extracts from their published works, a connected view of the character and tendency of the various theological opinions advocated by persons holding high and distinguished positions in the National Church, in relation to what has hitherto been universally regarded as the vital principles of the Christian Faith; and to indicate the more or less close affinity of these opinions with speculations which are essentially non-Christian. These opinions, it is true, are well known: but, up to the present time, they do not seem to have been considered in their *connection* with each other, and with what is commonly regarded as open infidelity. It is believed that questions involved in the discussions that have been recently raised,

are of supreme importance to the Church of England. It is therefore the duty of its members to do what they can to defend what appears to them to be truth, against the insidious inroads of fatal error. It is, however, right to state, once for all—and the reader is earnestly requested to bear the fact always in mind—that, in the first place, what is commonly supposed to be *the plain and obvious meaning* of the condemnatory clauses contained in this Creed, is here distinctly and unreservedly repudiated. Secondly, that the commonly received notions respecting the doctrines which constitute the body of the Creed, are, in the opinion of the writer, for the most part radically erroneous, and of pernicious influence on general theological thought. It is one thing, however, to misunderstand and misinterpret a document: it is another and a very different thing to discard it altogether. Only on the ground of this evident distinction, does any explanation or defence of this unpopular confession of faith seem possible.

The view of the subject, then, advocated in these pages, manifestly differs, to a very considerable extent, on some fundamental points, from that usually held and taught by theological writers distinguished alike for sound learning, acute penetration, and sincere piety. This difference, however, will be found on due examination to relate not so much to the statements of the Creed, as to *the sense* in which they are to be taken.

It may seem to some into whose hands these pages may happen to come, that to turn aside, even a little, from the common path of ordinary thought and conviction, on a question so weighty and difficult, is to adopt a course without proper warrant, marked by temerity, and fraught with danger. It may be sufficient perhaps to anticipate, to some extent, possible allegations of such a kind, by stating, that the comparatively few systematic comments which have hitherto appeared in elucidation and defence of this Creed, have evidently proved altogether inadequate to meet the urgent demands of thought and inquiry both within and without the Church. Owing to several causes, among which—paradoxical as it may seem—this very formula itself stands pre-eminent, the general state of popular religious opinion, among both clergy and laity, is most unsatisfactory. In times like the present, therefore, any effort, however humble and imperfect, made in good faith, to defend the principal doctrines of the Christian Religion, on the twofold ground of Holy Scripture and sound reason, seems fairly entitled to a candid and enlightened consideration, especially on the part of those to whose sacred office it more immediately belongs, to investigate and solemnly decide on questions so grave and difficult.

In the present critical state of Church affairs in this country, it is, perhaps, not too much to say, that the subject of these pages is one which possesses a more than usual claim upon the attention of those

more immediately concerned; inasmuch as the sole aim of the writer is to vindicate, *in a rational manner*, Divinely-revealed Truth, through the medium of this ancient and widely-received Symbol, so ignorantly and recklessly abused, so little studied.

It is one of the most obvious lessons of experience, that *new views* of old truths are not only possible, but, from the very nature of the case, are to be looked for, in the ordinary course of events. This is especially the case in the domain of theological speculation, the only solid basis of which is Bible Truth. *Merely human aspects* of Divine Revelation, like the human minds by which they have been determined, are subject, in the lapse of ages, to the most varied modifications. Not so, however, is it with DIVINE REVELATION itself. This remains always and everywhere the same—being, like its Almighty Author, “without variableness or shadow of turning.”

It seems almost unnecessary to state, that, in the endeavour to produce conviction in the mind of the reader, touching a subject which is destined sooner or later to cause grave anxiety to the Church of England, no other means shall be consciously employed than a fair use of the plain and manifestly declared doctrines of Holy Scripture, and the legitimate exercise of reason. These alone are of *paramount* authority in all controversies of Faith. To these alone appeal shall always be made. It will be admitted by all, that within these two sacred limits the utmost freedom should be enjoyed. “It is most

unreasonable," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "when either the thing itself ministers variety, or that we take licence to ourselves in variety of interpretations, or proclaim to all the world our great weakness, by our actually being deceived; that we should either prescribe to others *magisterially*, when we are in error, or limit their understandings, when the thing itself affords liberty and variety." ¹

Whether the Athanasian formula is to be retained any longer in our Service, is a question which must, in all probability, shortly receive some practical answer. Those who are best qualified to give an opinion will doubtless admit, that *merely to change its place in the Prayer Book* would serve no good end. On the other hand, to remove it simply and unconditionally, *without an equivalent*, would—in the present confused and unsettled state of the public mind in such matters—be the forerunner of a deplorable catastrophe. In all probability it would be the signal, and not without reason, for suddenly rending the Anglican Church in pieces. However this may be, it is at all events certain, that its retention, in accordance with antiquated and current modes of theological thought, is now no longer possible. In the present critical circumstances it behoves the Church to bear in mind the pregnant maxim of Bacon:—"A froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as innovation; and they

¹ *Lib. of Proph.* vol. vii. pp. 510, 511. (Heber's Ed.)

that reverence *too much* old things, are but a scorn to the new."

All things considered, the remedy recommended by apparently a majority in the Upper House of Convocation, would seem to be the best that could be devised. It is suggested that the Creed be, *in some way or other*, explained.

It may, indeed, be objected that any explanation which might be offered, would present as many difficulties as the original one; and that an attempt to impose such explanation *by authority*, would, in the present tone and temper of the public mind, be futile if not hazardous. There is much truth and force in the objection. The remedy might prove worse than the disease.

The suggestion which it is here ventured to offer—with every feeling of respect and deference to all immediately concerned—is, that for the present the Creed remain intact; and that all schools of theological thought be not only freely permitted, but even encouraged to explain it *bond fide* as best they can. The Governors of the Church can surely trust implicitly to the irresistible power of Truth to assert itself as paramount in the end. A clear idea will inevitably, at the last, succeed in displacing one that is obscure or incongruous. The real issue at stake is not so much the Creed, as the doctrine of our Lord's supreme Divinity. For the sake of the laity in general, who are unable to investigate such subjects, the Creed ought, if possible, to be defended. Its ad

versaries may not be permitted to *assume* its falsity. They are bound to hear the other side. There is much more involved in the question under consideration than is commonly supposed. The best and clearest explanation, if based on Scripture and reason, is certain ultimately to be willingly adopted by the wisest and best of the sincere and loyal sons of the Church. The true view of any subject is sure to be recognised in due time. Sooner or later, by its own spiritual and heaven-derived virtue and force, the Truth will find its way to men's understandings and hearts, and in the end triumph over all opposition.

The present, it is believed, is but an humble and very imperfect effort in the way of carrying out the foregoing suggestion. The writer claims only what has now happily become the common heritage of all—the liberty of prophesying, after his own manner, within just and reasonable limits. This liberty is at once the distinguishing characteristic of the Anglican Communion above all others; the priceless privilege of its members; the main source of its strength; and—if honestly employed—the chief ground of hope for its future concord, stability, and spiritual efficiency. Its clergy are free from the blinding and otherwise pernicious influence of *authoritative human judges* in things spiritual—unless they unhappily choose to create such a despotism for themselves. They are still able, if they will, to obey the Divine command of Him who alone can make men *free indeed*—“Call no man Master on earth.”

Amid the wide divergence of belief and persuasion, which prevails so extensively among sincere and good men, it cannot but be a real and permanent gain, in the end, to the cause of Truth, to promulgate principles, old and new, which have been honestly and carefully thought out.

These pages are addressed only to those who love truth *for its own sake*, wherever they may be—within the fold of the Church, or beyond its pale.

It is assumed throughout by the writer, that in the light of certain universal cognitions, the primary truths of Theology are at least as capable of being comprehended in their own order, as other and subordinate forms of truth. As in the days of the Apostles, so now, the *understanding* of Holy Scripture is possible, if only, to a degree suited to the wants of the age, the right method be employed. It is commonly thought otherwise, especially by the Clergy. What is usually by them designated *Faith*, is a belief in something incomprehensible; or that transcends our natural powers of apprehension; or that is utterly incompatible with ordinary modes of thinking—the *ground* of belief being that the Church so teaches. This, however, is faith in the unknown, which, in strictness of speech, is no faith at all, but a blind assent to a form of words without meaning. In this respect there is a startling agreement between the views of some of the clergy, and the more extreme forms of modern scepticism. Thus has arisen a deplorable separation between

Theology and Science. Both have arrived — although each in a different manner — at the conclusion, that the *object* of worship is the “Unknown.” Hence, on the part of the clergy, Faith and Truth have come to be regarded as quite distinct things ; when, nevertheless, genuine faith and truth are one and inseparable.

This unreasoning and blind faith had its origin in the spirit of Papal domination. Spiritual darkness, the bondage of the human understanding, is the chief prop of all false religions, and pre-eminently of the Papacy. In that religious system, therefore, an attempt is made, with the view of preserving its power and influence, to degrade the Word of God by determining that it is subordinate to the “Church ;” and thus the study of divine things is permitted, only after the reason has been put in chains.

This same principle of a blind faith passed from the Papal Religion to the Reformed Churches, and still prevails, under various guises, in most of the Protestant sects, the leaders of which seem not to have had the least suspicion, that in adopting such a principle, they were making common cause with Romanism. They were thus, for example, induced to establish, by a variety of singular fallacies, their irrational dogma of “Salvation by faith alone ;” and by so doing, they destroyed, as far as it was possible, a principal foundation of the Christian Religion, by separating Faith from Charity ; when nevertheless it is a most certain truth of the Christian Religion, that

no genuine living faith can possibly exist when separated from charity. Faith separate from charity is no faith ; for charity is the life, soul, and essence of faith.

Nothing can be further from the intention of the writer of these pages than to attempt to undervalue, in any way, the honest efforts of earnest and good men of the most diverse theological schools and religious communions, in so far as they tend, in any degree, to render the common confession of Christian belief, and the rule of Christian life, as brief, simple, and comprehensive as possible, consistently with conserving the very essentials of Christianity. These essentials may be said to be three in number :—

- i. A belief in the Supreme Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ii. A belief, in some real and *bond fide* sense, in the inspiration of the Word of God.
- iii. A belief that love to the Lord, and love towards the neighbour, constitute the essence and life of the Church in the mind of man—in other words, the kingdom of heaven within him.

The divisions of the Church are indeed deplorable ; but, notwithstanding, there is far more real agreement among good men of all creeds and systems, than appearances would authorise us to admit. There is, however, a genuine and also a

more or less spurious union among Christians. The former is not in any wise attainable without charity; but it is rendered more and more genuine and perfect, when charity is united to truth. For "Charity rejoiceth—in the truth." To spread the knowledge of truth *in the spirit of charity*, is to increase and intensify real unity. Now of all forms of truth, that which pertains to a knowledge of the object of Divine worship, is at once the highest and the most necessary to be known. "Ye worship ye know not what: *we know* what we worship," ought to be the language of the Church to the World. For ages, however, as is well known, the Church has been rent asunder by disputes upon this and kindred questions.

"Les hérésies dogmatiques des premiers temps," says the Bishop of Nîmes, "n'avaient pour la plupart blessé que quelques points de la foi. Celles du moyen âge avaient élargi le cercle de leurs agressions; mais pourtant elles laissaient encore un grand nombre de vérités debout et respectées. La Réforme, au contraire, ébranle le Symbole entier du faite à la base, et dans son vaste sein, comme dans un chaos tumultueux, presque toutes les hérésies antérieures se sont donné rendez-vous et s'agitent pêle-mêle."¹

If to this graphic and comprehensive sketch be added the state of uneasiness, in which all Roman Catholic countries are at this moment, in view of

¹ *Les Conciles Généraux*, p. 33.

certain religious questions; the deep gulf which separates the intelligence of a large and powerful portion of Roman Catholic Europe from all sympathy with the Papal religion; and if it be borne in mind, that all this is the *result* of nearly nineteen centuries of Christian instruction—the picture presents, in every way, a melancholy subject of contemplation.

From the time of the Council of Nice to the present hour, the Church, in a doctrinal point of view, has reeled to and fro like a drunken man, between one or other of the Protean modifications of Trinitheism and Arianism.

It is the sincere desire and prayer of the writer, that the views advanced in these pages may, under Divine Providence, be made the means of aiding, however slightly, the efforts of some among that considerable class of earnest Christian men, who are sincerely seeking to obtain, in an age of general doubt and perplexity, a somewhat clearer, more consistent, and more practical view of a subject as theologically profound as it is religiously important.

KENSINGTON,
Advent, 1869.

[O Lord Jesu Christ],¹ Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity [in thy Divine-Human Person]¹: We beseech Thee, that thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, O n e G o d, world without end. Amen.

¹ The *doctrine* of both the Epistle and the Gospel for the day, fully authorises the addition of these explanatory words to the Collect for *Trinity Sunday*.

THE
ATHANASIAN CREED
AND MODERN THOUGHT.

REMARKS ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MODERN
ANGLICAN THEOLOGY.

THE time seems at last to have arrived when those to whom the religious instruction of the nation has been intrusted, are bound to use plain, open, and unambiguous language, touching the fundamental truths of the Christian Faith. The lines of demarcation between the various theological schools, grow daily more clearly and sharply defined. During the last thirty years questions of a most profound and perplexing character have been raised in quick succession, in the different spheres of theology, philosophy, and science. Old and familiar problems have been presented for investigation under entirely new aspects. Strange and hitherto unheard-of hypotheses have been proposed for acceptance. Not a few opinions, which were deemed to have been long since exploded, have been resus-

citated with a suddenness which is surprising. As a consequence, weak, irresolute, and half-informed minds are not unfrequently led astray in the most opposite directions. The changes of opinion are so rapid, and sometimes of so startling a character, that the "religious world" is in a state of unusual agitation and bewilderment. Questions have been brought under discussion, of such grave moment, that they press for solution with ever-increasing urgency upon every Christian communion. Nor will it be doubted by those fully acquainted with the facts, that by far the largest share of the arduous task at present imposed upon the faithful apologists of Revealed Truth and the Reformed Religion, in this country, must fall—as it has always hitherto done—on the loyal clergy of the Anglican Church.

Old modes of treating difficult and disputed points of Theology no longer suffice for the needs of the time. A narrow and exclusively literal interpretation of the Bible has gradually led to the almost total rejection of any genuine and consistent notion of its Divine origin and inspiration. Accordingly—to take a familiar instance—the introductory chapters of the Book of Genesis, with which all Revealed Religion has a Divinely *organic* connection, is commonly spoken of in coarse and contemptuous language, by a somewhat influential class of thinkers, as "the legends of the Creation and Fall." Difficulties real or supposed have indeed been urged against the very foundations of the faith, in language so nakedly

precise, and with a spirit so fierce, that a thorough investigation of the entire subject cannot much longer, with safety, be evaded. What has, in all past ages, been deemed, by the wisest and best of mankind, the most sacred thing on earth, has in these days been made the subject of a criticism so bitter and reckless—in some cases so profane and blasphemous—that the purpose intended can no longer be mistaken by the most unsuspecting. Christians in general are agreed, that prevalent theological controversies involve, in their ultimate issues, consequences vital to the highest interests, not merely of this or that nation, but of mankind at large. The approaching general conflict of opinion, when it has once fairly set in, will doubtless seriously affect all concerned. Its reality and power will be felt, for good or evil, to a degree of which those who are indifferent to such movements of the human spirit, can form no idea.

The present is pre-eminently an age in which *principles* of every kind are called in question, and the foundations on which they rest subjected to the most rigid scrutiny of reason. The most sacred truths of Christianity have been violently assailed by new devices. To defend them in presence of the new forms of unbelief, and by new weapons when necessary, has become the first duty of the Church. Fundamentals must be stated afresh, and in the most distinct and categorical terms. The Church of England is, in a special manner, and for the most powerful reasons, called upon to explain and defend

her Formularies; and, if necessary, to adjust them in every practicable way consistent with the conservation of essential truth, and in a form adapted to the new requirements.

Some such course of action is now imperative. No Church could long subsist under the two-fold destructive process which for years past has been going on within her bosom.

The whole head is sick, under the influence of a "Biblical criticism" wanting in depth of thought, reverence, and sensibility to spiritual things. The very foundations of the Divine Word are being gradually but surely destroyed in the minds of the men of the Church, clergy as well as laity. They that bear rule are doubtless but too well aware of the fact, and deplore its existence sincerely and heartily. It must, however, be confessed that, from whatever cause, they seem powerless to do aught but complain, condemn, and hope for better times.

The whole heart is faint from the enervating effects of a spurious sensuous devotion, which, within a few years, has rapidly sprung up in her midst, and already threatens the most serious evils. Under the delusive names of "Catholic Revival" and "Corporate Reunion," an almost undisguised attempt is made to introduce notions and practices into the English Church—adroitly modified to suit the peculiar circumstances—which the English Nation, with characteristic sincerity, courage, and completeness, solemnly repudiated and reprobated at the Reforma-

tion. A hope, equally vain and extravagant, is entertained of restoring the Church of England, and the English people, to what is called "obedience to the ancient faith." The true sense of this last expression, as is well known, is hostile to the principles of the Primitive Apostolic Church, and implies a puerile acquiescence in the empty forms of an obsolete ritualism; and an unreasoning adoption of the phantasies of an exploded mediæval theology, in which the pure Word of God lies buried beneath a mass of unmeaning abstractions.

A zealous writer of the "Reunion" school reveals the character of the movement to which he belongs, by declaring, in a somewhat patronising manner, his estimate of the Bible in the following words: "It is the devotional manual of the Christian who 'knows the truth,' and is given to him '*because he knows it.*'"¹ Thus, by profanely removing the Word of the Living God from its rightful position of *supreme authority*, as the light and guide of the Church, a way is made by which the subtly disguised materialism of the scholastic philosophy may be introduced into the bosom of a Reformed Church, under the specious names of "real objective Presence," and similar "words without knowledge." By a skilful playing with terms, the Scriptural and Apostolic safeguard and protest, contained in the XXVIII. Article, against one of the

¹ Sequel to the *Kiss of Peace*, p. 60.

grossest of Papal superstitions, is virtually set aside ; and, by a sinister interpretation, the teaching of the Article itself is made to conform to the dogma of Transubstantiation.

If, in addition to what has been advanced, the increasing tendency observable in the general character and tone of the public manners and amusements, to become more and more "of the earth earthy," be taken into account ; may it not be asked, with reason, what Church or religious communion could long withstand the power of their combined influence ?

Such are, in very general terms, some of the dangers which menace the existence of the National Church. Does she possess, within herself, the means of defending herself against enemies so formidable ? Is she able and willing to remove errors and defects, and to defend HOLY WRIT, of which she professes to be a witness and a keeper ? If such a power be anywhere within her reach, it behoves her, at once, to grasp it firmly, and use it with all prudence, courage, and determination. Momentous consequences are involved in the course of action which she may see fit to adopt, in the crisis which has now visibly come upon her. Is she, in the future, to become in an eminent degree, "a city set on an hill," which "cannot be hid ;" or, in consequence, as it should seem, of having left her first love, is her candlestick to be removed "out of his place" ?

Whatever may be in store for her in the unknown

future, it is certain that her position is now one of the most critical and perilous which she has ever been called upon to encounter. Human plans and purposes are secretly guided by an influence which is *infinite*. In the hidden counsels of Divine Providence, the crisis will in some way be overruled for good. It may, in the end, serve, among other things, to reveal to the Church of England, who are in reality her friends, and who are her enemies. It may be the occasion of making her more alive than she has ever yet been, to the appalling ignorance which prevails, in the mass of her members, respecting the genuine Scriptural meaning of her Formularies. It may be the means of causing her to feel, as she has never yet done, the true character and bearings of the discordant, incongruous, and incompatible notions which, up to the present, she has been able to comprehend within her pale. It will doubtless serve to bring vividly to view the latent Tritheism, Arianism, Socinianism, and infidelity which prevail to so large an extent, consciously or unconsciously, in her popular teaching; and which have long been secretly preying upon the inner spiritual life of her members. It will, it is to be hoped, serve to convince her, that a Church which adopts a Liturgical form of Worship is bound to use every available means of explaining, *rationally and Scripturally*, its Liturgy; and to endeavour to fill up more and more completely, its authorised doctrinal and devotional forms with ever new and fresh ideas, derived from an enlightened

and conscientious study of the Holy Word. It is more than enough to destroy the life and spirit of any Church to trust, as is so generally the case, to the mere perfunctory "reading of the prayers" as a means of attracting the great body of the hard-working, clear-headed, practical English people in the direction of "the beauty of holiness."

Among the most discouraging "signs of the times," in connection with the future of the Church, may be mentioned the very general disinclination, evinced by all orders of the clergy, to enter upon any consecutive and sustained investigation of the *essential principles of Christian Theology*, with a view to meet present difficulties. There is, indeed, no lack of sincere, energetic, and self-denying Christian efforts in various other directions in aid of the Church. The "one thing needful"—the Science of Theology—has unhappily been hitherto strangely neglected by a large proportion of the clergy. A more profound and systematic study of *spiritual principles* is plainly an indispensable condition of preserving the Church in her true position, and regaining her legitimate influence over the vast number of intelligent minds that, from some cause or other, have become estranged from her ministrations. Divine Revelation is assailed by new enemies, furnished with altogether new and strange weapons. They must be repelled by new modes of defence. Even among the members of the Church, new, and in several respects formidable difficulties have been

raised, which must sooner or later be met by suitable and adequate explanations. Theology has come to be mixed up with the most subtle and complex problems in philosophy and science. For, although each of these great departments of human knowledge is distinct, they are all nevertheless intimately related. "*Etenim omnes artes,*" says even the Gentile orator, "*quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi COGNATIONE quiddam inter se continentur.*"¹ Permeating them all, yet supreme in all, and in a certain peculiar sense distinct from all, is the Sacred Science—the systematic study of which, in its deeper and more recondite aspects, has been almost culpably neglected in the English Church. The exceptions prove the rule. Mere critical and other Biblical learning has, indeed, been extensively and assiduously cultivated: but the Higher Theology is seldom made a subject of study for its own sake, and yet a necessary condition of the very existence of Christianity in this land, is the thorough study of Theology.

Misinterpretations and perversions of the letter of Holy Scripture, arising from the commonly received canons of Biblical interpretation, have gradually and insensibly led to the adoption of most erroneous and absurd views concerning the Divine essence and character of the One living and true

¹ *Cic. pro Arch. 1.*

God. To a similar source may be traced numberless other whimsical notions and pernicious persuasions, originating in human pride and ambition, plainly contradicting the teaching of Scripture, and at variance with the dictates of sound reason. Thus the very errors and falsities, promulgated in the name of Christianity, are among the most formidable obstacles to its true reception and advancement. They have unhappily excited in many, otherwise favourably disposed minds, a violent revulsion against *every form of Christian belief*. They have produced, to an extent which may be justly called alarming, their natural fruits—scepticism, indifference, atheism. It has thus come to pass in these days of boasted civilization and enlightenment, that in a certain very real and awful sense, the Divine Truth once for all given to man—the Revealed Word of God—may be said to be crucified afresh, and put to an open shame, between the twin robbers, Superstition and Infidelity.

The evils, then, which in these days beset the Christian faith on all sides, are plainly of the greatest magnitude. It is the sacred duty of every man who takes a real and living interest in the progress of Revealed Truth to do what he can, however feeble and imperfect may be his efforts, to “hold forth the Word of life.”

One thing at least is sufficiently clear. The idle claim of Church authority, lately set up by a so-called “Catholic Party,” will avail as little for

the protection and establishment of truth, and the refutation and subjugation of error, as the clumsy and worldly machinery of Ecclesiastical Courts. Both expedients, each after its kind, will prove to be a broken staff of an Egyptian reed, piercing the hand of him who leans on it. One course only seems open to the Church, promising a reasonable hope of success—a free, candid, and impartial appeal to *First Principles in Theology*. On this ground alone the battle for Divine Truth and the Church, must ultimately be fought and won. The conditions on which such an appeal can be fairly and honestly made, remain to be carefully considered. There must, however, be *perfect freedom of investigation* into the truth of doctrine, within certain just limits. These limits are in general not difficult to be defined. The Church is, or ought to be, the Custodian of the “faith once delivered to the saints.” This faith is to be found wholly and completely in Holy Scripture. Herein are contained *all things* necessary to salvation. Thence only is to be derived every article of the Faith. Now this position cannot under any pretext be surrendered by the Church to the enemy. Christians *hold it*: let their opponents, by legitimate reasoning, dispossess them if they can.

Ignorance of the true meaning of an ancient inscription, is no reason for rejecting it as mythical or spurious. The same rule applies in the case of certain modern commentaries upon the most sacred document in the world—the Holy Scriptures. The

Bible is one thing; false or inadequate interpretations of it, another. *Human views* of Bible teaching are fairly open to the freest criticisms of the sceptics. The Bible itself, as a record of Divine Revelation to man—as the supreme and unique bond of communion between the Creator and the creature whom He made at first in the Divine image—must be held sacred. It is *this*, and not imperfect and discordant human interpretations, whether ancient or modern, which the Church is bound to keep “whole and undefiled.” The Church is *ipso facto* destroyed when it betrays the trust divinely committed to it. The limits laid down by the sixth Article of the Church of England ought to be the limits of controversy as between all Christians and non-Christians. It is said *ought* to be; for there is nothing which can *reasonably* claim to be regarded as divine and eternal, but the Word of God. Those who give this up, have left themselves nothing DIVINE to contend for.

Inadequate, erroneous, or false conceptions of Revealed Truth may make their appearance age after age, and in the lapse of time be modified, or ultimately fade away altogether in the light of a superior view; “but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.” He, who alone is Truth, has said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *My words* shall not pass away.”

The Anglican Church has hitherto been supposed to keep the “golden mean” as between infidelity

and superstition, anarchy and tyranny, in matters ecclesiastical. Her claims to this position are now, however, beginning to be seriously called in question, even by her warmest adherents. It depends mainly on the faithful use she makes of the many and great advantages and privileges which, under Divine Providence, she still possesses, whether she shall be able to retain long her vantage ground as a National and a *Christian Church*. She is still unquestionably the most liberal and tolerant religious communion in Christendom. If, as must be conceded, Divine Truth can be taught and received only *in freedom*, then, certainly, of all Churches in the world, she is, on the whole, the most favourably circumstanced for its reception and promulgation. She still possesses incomparable advantages. She has been blessed with invaluable opportunities. It must, however, be confessed by all, that her future is deeply overcast by clouds and darkness. She is beset, within and without, by dangers of no ordinary character. The time may not be far distant when it will be no longer possible to avoid confessing the fact, that "Her hedges are broken down, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her." At present her worst foes would seem to be those "of her own household."

In the midst of so many difficulties and dangers, proximate and remote, two things must at all hazards be preserved whole and entire—the sacred *deposit* of the Christian Faith, and a just freedom of investigation in things spiritual. Is this possible ?

Speaking from the point of view of her Formularies, it may reasonably be asserted of the Church of England, that she knows but too well that *all* Christian communions carry the Divine treasure of Heavenly Truth in "earthen vessels." She therefore sets up no vain claim to the possession of infallibility. She tolerates no such unauthorised claim in another. For her, the attribute of infallibility is DIVINE, and pertains only to Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" and who reveals Himself fully, clearly, unmistakeably, in all things "necessary to salvation" only in and by His own Eternal Word. She knows that, from beginning to end throughout, that Word testifies of Him. She knows that the Truths it contains are, in themselves, above and *independent* of man; and that without such revelation he must for ever have been ignorant of them. She knows that they emanate from a superior—a spiritual—sphere, the very abode of pure truth. She knows that they are, in some sense, the light of Heaven itself clothed in human language, and adapted, by Divine Love and Wisdom, to the state and needs of man. She knows that they were commanded to be *taught*—not to be assented to blindly; and, that in so far as it is possible to a being like man, they were intended to be—with ever-increasing clearness as the ages roll on—"spiritually discerned." She knows that God is not a God of darkness, but of light, and that the entrance of HIS WORDS giveth light. She has, therefore, no fear for the ad-

vance of real science and true philosophy. On the contrary, she welcomes with thankfulness all genuine progress made in them. She regards them as the means divinely provided, by which, in these days, it has pleased Him, in "whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," to open still more fully the human understanding, that men might be able with ever increasing clearness to "understand the Scriptures."

It is not too much to say, that the primary principle laid down in the sixth Article of the Church has never yet been fully grasped in its length, breadth, and depth, much less exhausted. It still constitutes *the only impregnable theological position*. As long as the Church of England, or any other, holds by the WORD OF GOD, truly and faithfully, according to her lights, she must in the end prevail over her enemies in whatever form.

It is not to be denied, however, that belief in Holy Scripture, as being in some real and intelligible sense, a peculiar supernatural revelation from God, is rapidly passing away from the minds of otherwise intelligent men. The literature of the day, in general, affords abundant evidence of the fact. Unhappily, even the clergy may also be adduced in illustration. One of the clearest indications of the changed state of the public mind, on the subject in question, appeared in the form of a letter from a Bishop of the English Church, published in the *Times* newspaper

upwards of three years ago, on the subject of "Prayer to Christ." There can be little doubt that the real aim of that letter was to raise a controversy, which, however long and warily it may be evaded through indolence, timidity, or any other cause, must at last be openly encountered. The great question manifestly coming on for discussion, may be expressed in something like the following terms:—Is prayer to Christ as being GOD *omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent*, a doctrine expressly declared in Holy Scripture? Or, to put it still more specifically, is the *supreme* Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ to continue to be publicly and solemnly acknowledged and confessed in the Church of England—*without reserve*—as an essential principle of the Christian faith, wanting which, a Church is only a Church in name; and therefore not to be openly called in question by those holding office in the Church?

More than one sign on the troubled ecclesiastical horizon already points to a not very distant period when this will be, in Anglican theology, the question of questions, giving character and shape to all others; for in it is involved the true Scriptural and rational *idea* of God as He has been pleased to reveal Himself to man—the MASTER IDEA in the wonderful, mysterious, and sacred domain of pure theological contemplation, and real Christian life.

The views entertained of the Word of God—modes of interpreting it—essential doctrines to be derived from it—the meaning and force of Creeds, and Ar-

ticles of Faith—will mainly depend, for their accuracy and value, on the *idea* we have of the DIVINE PERSON of our Lord Jesus Christ. All spiritual truth converges upon Him as upon its proper centre and focus. The doctrine concerning our Lord's Person is the only trustworthy criterion of a genuine or a spurious faith in relation to the Supreme Object of divine worship. It is admitted by professing Christians of every name, that, apart from Him, no rational conception whatever can be formed of the essence and character of the Divine Being. And perhaps in no better way can a clear and just notion of the actual state and apparent tendency of modern Anglican liberal Theology be obtained, than by placing, in order, a selection from the opinions expressed by several eminent writers, which have a more or less direct bearing on the present subject.

The first shall be taken from a letter written by Dr. Arnold, in reference to an objection made against his pamphlet on Church Comprehension, on the ground of its requiring "that they should address Christ as an object of worship."

I.—Extracts from Dr. Arnold's *Life and Correspondence*.

ON THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP.

i. . . . "it appears to me that the feelings with which we regard Him [*i. e.* our Lord Jesus Christ] are of much greater importance . . . than the question of His humanity or proper divinity.

“My great objection to Unitarianism in its present form in England, where it is professed sincerely, is that it makes Christ virtually dead. Our relation to Him is past instead of present; and the result is notorious, that instead of doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, the language of Unitarians loses this peculiarly Christian character, and assimilates to that of mere Deists; ‘Providence,’ ‘the Supreme Being,’ and other such expressions taking the place of ‘God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ ‘the Lord,’ &c., which other Christians, like the Apostles, have found at once most natural to them, and most delightful. For my own part, considering one great object of God’s revealing Himself in the Person of Christ to be *the furnishing us with an object of worship* which we could at once love and understand; or, in other words, the supplying *safely and wholesomely* that want in human nature, which has shown itself in false religions, in ‘making gods after our own devices,’ it does seem to me to be forfeiting *the peculiar benefits thus offered*, if we persist in attempting to approach to God in *His own incomprehensible essence*, which as no man hath seen or can see, so no man can conceive it. And, while I am most ready to allow the provoking and most ill-judged language in which the truth, as I hold it to be, respecting God has been expressed by Trinitarians, so, on the other hand, I am inclined to think that Unitarians have deceived themselves by fancying that they could understand the notion of one God any better than that of *God in Christ*: whereas, it seems to me, that it is only of God in Christ that I can *in my present state of being* conceive any thing at all. To know God the Father, that is, *God as He is in Himself*, in His to us incomprehensible essence, seems the great and most blessed promise *reserved for us* when this mortal shall have put on immortality.”

. . . “Will you forgive me . . . for expressing my belief and fervent hope, that if we could get rid of the Athanasian Creed, and of some other instances of what I would call the technical language of Trinitarianism, many good Unitarians would have a stumbling-block removed out of their path, and would join their fellow Christians

*in bowing the knee to Him who is Lord both of the dead and the living."*¹

ON THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

ii. "By the way, your criticism on a passage in my Christmas Day Sermon is quite just; and, if my Sermon expresses any other doctrine [viz., than that Deity does not admit of degrees], it has failed in expressing my meaning. Surely, I do not hold that the Godhead of the Son is really inferior to that of the Father, *but only κατ' ἁνωποῦ*,—that is, it is presented to us *mixed* with an inferior nature, and also with certain qualities, *visibility for instance*, which have been assumed in condescension, but which are still what St. Paul calls 'an emptying of the Divinity,' presenting it to us *in a less absolutely perfect form*, because it is not merely itself, but itself with *something inferior joined to it*."²

ON DIFFICULTIES IN SUBSCRIPTION.

iii. . . . "My own answer must be clear to you from my own practice. I do not believe the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed, under any qualification given of them, *except such as substitute for them propositions of a wholly different character*. . . . But I read the Athanasian Creed, and have and would again subscribe the Article about it, because I do not conceive the clauses in question to be essential parts of it, or that they were retained deliberately by our Reformers after the propriety of retaining or expunging them had been distinctly submitted to their minds. They retained the Creed, I doubt not, deliberately; to show that they wished to keep the faith of the general Church in matters relating to the Arian, Macedonian, Nestorian, Eutychian, and Socinian controversies; and as they did not scruple to burn Arians, so neither would they be likely to be shocked by the damnatory clauses against them; but I do not imagine that the Article about the Creed was intended in the least to refer to the clauses, as if they sup-

¹ *Arnold's Life and Corresp.* vol. i. pp. 356, 357, 358. Ed. 1845.

² *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 269, 270.

posed that a man might embrace the rest of the Creed, and yet reject them. Nor do I think that the Reformers, or the best and wisest men of the Church since, would have objected to any man's subscription, if they had conceived such a case; but would have said, 'What we mean you to embrace is *the belief of the general Church*, as expressed in the Three Creeds, with regard to the points,—many of them having been much disputed,—on which those Creeds pronounce;—the degree of blameableness in those who do not embrace this belief is another matter, on which we do not intend to speak particularly in this Article.'"¹

On the views expressed in these three passages the following brief remarks may suffice:—

1. The question of our Lord's proper divinity is regarded as a secondary consideration; although it is, in truth, the original and primary doctrine of the entire Word of God; and its sincere acknowledgment *in the Church* is the unique source of all right feeling in Christian worship.

God is said to reveal himself in Christ, as one Being *in another being*. Christ is represented as furnishing to man, in this life, a *quasi* object of worship, in the way of a *safe and wholesome accommodation* to the idolatrous tendency existing in human nature. It is, moreover, averred, that all we can know of God in this present state of being, is in and by this exalted human and vicarious representative of Him. God the Father, that is, God as He is in Himself, is to be clearly and fully known only in the future state—the plain

¹ Ibid. pp. 125, 126.

inference being, that the *representative character* of Godhead with which our Lord is said to have been endowed, *will be put off*, and the blessed in heaven shall be "sons of God," *like him*. To get rid of the Athanasian Creed and the technical language of Trinitarianism, would prepare the way, it is supposed, for the acknowledgment of this *quasi* Deity, which, in accordance with the above views, may properly be called an "idol Mediator." It is to be noted that He is significantly called "Lord," but not GOD, of the dead and the living. All nations are to bow down in presence of this Holy and Divine King, *before His reign is ended*, but, it should seem, not *after* that supposed event . . . 'He is the one perfectly good man.'¹

2. It seems also to be confessed with some reserve, that "the Godhead of the Son is not really inferior to that of the Father, but only *κατ' οἰκονομίαν*, &c."—where the reader—owing to the use of a peculiarly ambiguous phrase, taken from the "technical language of Trinitarianism"—is again left in doubt as to the real meaning of the writer, which must evidently be either Unitarian, or what is known as Sabellian, or Tritheistic.

3. The condemnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed are confessedly not believed in, except in some

¹ The exposition of the doctrine of the Divine Trinity, given by this estimable, sincere, and pious writer in his volume of "*Sermons on the Interpretation of Scripture*," apparently vacillates in meaning between the above opinions and the ordinary Tritheistic view.

sense—not specified—wholly different from their obvious meaning. The same, however, might be said of the “six days” of creation, read every Sunday in the Decalogue, and also of JEHOVAH GOD as speaking, resting, being angry, and a thousand similar expressions: but surely this is no argument for “getting rid” of all those parts of Holy Scripture in which they occur, but a powerful motive urging to the endeavour to *understand* them in their genuine and full meaning.

Finally, subscription to the three Creeds is taken to involve “embracing the belief of the general Church,” whatever that may mean. Such terms of subscription will doubtless appear to many an empty formality, and calculated to act injuriously on the character of the Clergy for veracity and candour. The question here considered, however, is by no means concerned with the totally distinct one of personal feeling of responsibility in subscribing—but simply with the *matter of fact*, and the known *results*.

II.—Extracts from *Essays and Reviews*.

THE EDUCATION OF THE WORLD.

i. “The world was once a child under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the Father. Then, when the fit season had arrived, the Example to which all ages should turn *was sent* to teach men what they ought to be. Then the human race was left to itself to be guided by the teaching of the Spirit within.”

ii. “The Jewish nation, selected among all as the depository of what may be termed, in a pre-eminent sense, religious

truth, received after a short preparation, the Mosaic system. This system is a mixture of moral and positive commands:

. . . But the reason for all the minute commands is never given. Why they may eat the sheep and not the pig they are not told. The commands are not confined to general principles, but run into such details as to forbid tattooing or disfiguring the person, to command the wearing of a blue fringe, and the like. That such commands should be sanctioned by divine authority is *utterly irreconcilable with our present feelings.*"¹

"In short, the Jewish nation had lost very much when John the Baptist came to prepare the way for his Master; but time had not stood still, nor had that course of education whereby *the Jew* was to be fitted to give the last revelation to the world.

"The results of this discipline of the Jewish nation may be summed up in two points—a settled national belief in the unity and spirituality of God, and an acknowledgment of the paramount importance of chastity as a point of morals." ²

. . . "The Old Testament . . . a ready-made *text-book* of devotion and instruction." ³

iii. "But the childhood of the world was over when our Lord appeared on earth. The tutors and governors had done their work. It was time that the second teacher of the human race should begin his labour. *The second teacher is Example.*" ⁴

"The second stage . . . in the education of man was the presence of our Lord upon earth. Those few years of His divine presence seem, as it were, to balance all the systems and creeds and worships which preceded, all the Church's life which has followed since. . . . The one Example of all examples came in the 'fulness of time,' just when the world was fitted to feel the power of His presence. Had His revelation been delayed till now, assuredly it would

¹ *Essays and Reviews*, pp. 5, 8.

³ *Ibid.* p. 12.

² *Ibid.* p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 20.

have been hard for us to recognise His Divinity; for the faculty of Faith has turned inwards, and cannot now accept any outer manifestations of the truth of God. Our vision of the Son of God is now aided by the eyes of the Apostles, and by that aid we can recognise the Express Image of the Father." . . . "If we have lost that freshness of faith which would be the first to say to a poor carpenter—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God—yet we possess, in the greater cultivation of our religious understanding, that which, perhaps, we ought not to be willing to give in exchange . . . But they [*i.e.* the early Christians] had a keenness of perception which we have not, and could see the immeasurable difference between our Lord and *all other men* as we could never have seen it. Had our Lord come later . . . the power of His life would not have sunk so deeply into the world's heart; the truth of His Divine Nature would not have been recognised." ¹

iv. "Three companions were appointed by Providence to give their society to this creature [the human race] whom God was educating; Greece, Rome, and the Early Church. To these three mankind has ever since looked back, and will ever hereafter look back with the same affection, the same lingering regret, with which age looks back to early manhood. In these three, mankind remembers the brilliant social companion whose wit and fancy sharpened the intellect and refined the imagination; the bold and clever leader with whom to dare was to do, and whose very name was a signal of success; and the earnest, heavenly-minded friend, whose saintly aspect was a revelation in itself." ²

v. "He [*i.e.* the spirit or conscience] is the third great teacher and the last." ³

The Church, in the fullest sense, is left to herself to work out, by her *natural faculties*, the principles of her own action. And whatever assistance she is to receive in doing

¹ *Essays and Reviews*, pp. 24, 25.

² *Ibid.* p. 26.

³ *Ibid.* p. 31.

so, is to be through those natural faculties, and not in spite of them or without them.”¹

vi. . . . “many of the doctrinal statements [of the Early Church] are plainly unfitted for permanent use” . . .²

vii. “It [the Bible] is a history; even the doctrinal parts of it are cast in a historical form, and are best studied by considering them *as records of the time at which they were written*, and as conveying to us the highest and greatest religious life of that time. Hence we use the Bible not to override, but to *evoke the voice of conscience*.” . . .

“The current [of Biblical interpretation] is all one way—it evidently points to *the identification of the Bible with the voice of conscience*.” . . . “The principle of private judgment puts conscience between us and the Bible, making *conscience the supreme interpreter*, whom it may be a duty to enlighten, but whom it can never be a duty to disobey.”³

Unhappily the opinions and speculations set forth in this Essay are carefully clothed in language which may be termed *oracular*. The fear of doing injustice to the partially expressed views of the writer makes criticism difficult. To those, however, who possess even a general acquaintance with the peculiar theological notions of Dr. Samuel Clark or Theophilus Lindsey, a brief comparison will suffice forcibly to suggest what is intended to be taught; and this suggestion is greatly strengthened by the remarkable, but not entirely unaccountable, reticence observable throughout the Essay on points, touching which, writers of a different school of theological

¹ *Essays and Reviews*, p. 40.

² *Ibid.* p. 41.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 44, 45.

opinion would not have hesitated to use the utmost plainness of speech. As the most striking and instructive example of this reticence may be mentioned, the notions and hypotheses advanced by the writer in connexion with the doctrine of the *supreme* Divinity of our Lord.

1. A fanciful speculation is presented to the reader as being, in the writer's conception, the "Divine plan" of educating the World. Those who agree with the views of Priestley or Belsham, or even, perhaps, with those of Mr. Martineau, might find themselves in complete accord with most of the leading views of this "Plan."

2. The revelation of Eternal Truth, miraculously transmitted under an express and peculiar form, by the infinite and Eternal I AM to the children of Israel, *by the hand of Moses*, is termed—with a significance which, from the context, is but too evident—the "Mosaic system." The minute details, openly and repeatedly declared in the Word to have been delivered under supernatural conditions by Divine command, are manifestly regarded by the Essayist as trifles suited to the "childhood state" of man; and the reasonable as well as pious Christian belief that they were "sanctioned" by Divine authority, is dogmatically declared to be "utterly irreconcilable with our present feelings." John the Baptist is regarded as a messenger preparing the way for his "Master," and not—as the Scripture openly asserts—for the HIGHEST, that

is, for Jehovah God in human form.¹ The views of the character and design of the Old Testament, advocated in a number of the above extracts, and repeated in the most varied forms throughout the Essay, are vitiated by the common fallacy of the "one meaning" system of interpretation—which judges of the inner spiritual essence of God's Word from the mere outward *appearance* of that natural garment where-with, for wisest and most merciful reasons, He has been pleased to cover, in part, its Divine treasures. Accordingly, it needs occasion no surprise to meet with such statements as the following:—"The sum of Jewish instruction was belief in one God, and in the paramount importance of chastity." The Old Testament is called "a ready-made text-book of devotion and instruction."² It is nowhere hinted at, much less openly avowed, that the Bible is, in any sense, the *infinite* Word of the Lord.

3. It is asserted that "the second teacher is Example"—not GOD INCARNATE, as a Divine Example, *teaching*.

It is proper to remark, once for all, that speculations as to what *would* have happened had Revelation been delayed till now are—considering the infinitely sacred character of the subject—not in harmony

¹ Cf. Isa. xl. 3 ; St. Luke, i. 76.

² It must be confessed that such assertions, by whomsoever made, betray a temerity utterly inconsistent with a sober, diligent, connected, and *bonâ fide* study of the Divine oracles.

with the requirements of a genuine spirit of caution, modesty, and reverence, in a teacher of Christian truth.

As to the obscure and metaphysical assertion that "the faculty of faith has turned inwards," it seems to mean (if anything), that the supposed "improvement" in the gift of spiritual perception belonging to men in these days, is altogether incompatible with the admission of the possibility of any miraculous manifestations proceeding directly and immediately from God. If this, or anything like it, be the meaning, then such a state of mind would rather be a proof that the "faculty of faith" had turned more and more outwards—to earth rather than to heaven.

He who is THE LORD, it is averred, is known, at this day, *by the aid of the Apostles*, to be the express *image* of the Father—apparently in the sense of "a perfect man," or "the Example." Now as this knowledge is thus admitted to be at second hand, the statement—in so far as the Essayist is concerned—may seem to the writer to be the truth. A more direct and immediate intuition, however, in His own DIVINE PERSON, of Him who said "*I am the light of the World,*" "*Come unto Me,*" would doubtless have resulted in knowledge of an order incomparably superior to that which is implied in the merely external and superficial notion of "an image" of God.

Again: the "Divine nature" of THE LORD is

taken to mean "the immeasurable difference between Him and all *other men*."

4. The highly fanciful picture of the "three companions," in accordance with views already intimated, apparently ignores the Old Testament as the Divine Word. If by "the earnest heavenly-minded friend," be intended a personification of the Early Church, then the expression is, in many senses, a bold figure. If the reference be to our Lord, the conclusion is obvious.

5. *Conscience* is arbitrarily declared to be the *third* great teacher of mankind; although THE WORD says "*One* is your Guide (or leader)—the CHRIST."¹ It is also asserted that the Church is left to herself to work out *by her natural faculties* the principles of her own action. THE WORD, however, says to the disciples, and through them to the Universal Church in all coming time—"Without ME ye can do nothing²:" "Make disciples of all nations . . . by *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I AM with you alway to the consummation of the age."³ Both these declarations of our Lord himself necessarily imply the existence of Divine attributes as essentially inhering in the HUMAN PERSON of our Lord, and also their unceasing operation at every moment, on individual minds, in every coming age.

6. It is further alleged that "*many* of the doctrinal

¹ St. Matt. xxiii. 3. ² St. John, xv. 5. ³ St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

statements of the Early Church are plainly unfitted for *permanent use*." Whether the Creeds or the doctrine of our Lord's supreme Godhead be intended is—with the usual reticence—not stated. It is to be regretted that at least *some* of the doctrinal statements alluded to had not been formally specified.

7. The peculiar opinions of the writer on the subject of the Bible, as a Book of Divine Revelation, are deserving of special attention. It is broadly asserted that the Word of God is best studied—not as the express Revelation of the Eternal Creator to His creatures—but as "*records* of the time at which they were written . . . conveying the highest and greatest religious life *of that time*." Over these records some abstract and undefined metaphysical entity called "conscience" is to be supreme *judge*; that is, the weak and erring recipient of Divine Light is not to seek for illumination in the eternal Word of Life, but is to *sit in judgment* upon the very revelation itself of the "Father of lights." Saul, persecuting the Christians to the death, being zealous for the God of his fathers, may perhaps be not unfairly taken as a practical illustration of the occasional action of the peculiar principle here advocated. Fortunately, the Apostle was not *left to himself* to act from the light of his own natural faculties, nor to follow the voice of that conscience which his previous study had evoked: but was enlightened—not by his conscience, over which there was a vail—but *supernaturally*, by Jehovah God,

that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Divine or Glorified Humanity, by whom he was instructed and guided; and Who, in mere mercy to him and to the world—by a living voice and the power of His love—enabled him to *disobey* the cruel dictates of his spurious and beclouded conscience.

III. Extracts from Prof. Jowett's Essay *On the Interpretation of Scripture*.

i. "It is a received view with many, that the meaning of the Bible is to be defined by that of the Prayer Book; while there are others who interpret 'the Bible and the Bible only' with a silent reference to the traditions of the Reformation. Philosophical differences are in the background, into which the differences about Scripture also resolve themselves. They seem to run up at last into a difference of opinion respecting Revelation itself—whether given beside the human faculties or through them, whether an interruption of the laws of nature or their perfection and fulfilment."¹

ii. "The office of the interpreter is not to add another [meaning], but to recover the original one; the meaning, that is, of the words as they struck on the ears or flashed before the eyes of those who first heard and read them."²

"Much of the uncertainty which prevails in the interpretation of Scripture arises out of party efforts to wrest its meaning to different sides. There are, however, deeper reasons which have hindered *the natural meaning* of the text from immediately and universally prevailing. One of these is the unsettled state of many questions which have an important but indirect bearing on this subject. Some of these questions veil themselves in ambiguous terms; and no one likes to draw them out of their hiding-place into the light of day. In natural science it is felt to be useless to

¹ *On the Interpretation of Scripture*, pp. 330, 331.

² *Ibid.* p. 338.

build on assumptions; in history we look with suspicion on a *priori* ideas of what ought to have been; in mathematics, when a step is wrong we pull the house down until we reach the point at which the error is discovered. But in theology it is otherwise; there the tendency has been to conceal the unsoundness of the foundation under the fairness and loftiness of the superstructure.”¹

iii. . . . “the language in which our Saviour speaks of his own union with the Father is interpreted by the language of the creeds. Those who remonstrate against *double senses*, allegorical interpretations, forced reconcilements, find themselves met by a sort of pre-supposition that ‘God speaks not as man speaks.’ The limitation of the human faculties is confusedly appealed to as a reason for abstaining from investigations which are quite within their limits. . . . It is better to close the book than to read it under conditions of thought which are imposed from without. Whether those conditions of thought are the traditions of the Church, or the opinions of the religious world—Catholic or Protestant—makes no difference. They are inconsistent with the freedom of the truth and the moral character of the Gospel.”²

iv. “The word inspiration has received more numerous gradations and distinctions of meaning than perhaps any other in the whole of theology.” . . . “*Nor for any of the higher or supernatural views of inspiration is there any foundation in the Gospels or Epistles.* There is no appearance in their writings that the Evangelists or Apostles had any *inward gift*, or were subject to any power external to them different from that of preaching or teaching which they daily exercised; nor do they any where lead us to suppose that they were free from error or infirmity.”³

v. “To the question, ‘What is inspiration?’ the first answer . . . is, ‘*That idea of Scripture which we gather from the knowledge of it.*’”⁴

¹ *On the Interpretation of Scripture*, p. 342.

² *Ibid.* p. 343.

³ *Ibid.* p. 345.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 347.

vi. . . . "any true doctrine of inspiration *must* conform to all well-ascertained facts of history or of science."

. . . "the interpretation of Scripture has nothing to do with any opinion respecting *its origin*." ¹ . . .

vii. "Between Scripture and the Nicene or Athanasian Creed, a world of the understanding comes in—that world of abstractions and second notions; and mankind are no longer at the same point as when the whole of Christianity was contained in the words, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou mayest be saved,' when the Gospel centred in the attachment to a living or recently departed *friend* and Lord." ²

viii. "Absorbed as St. Paul was in the person of Christ with an intensity of faith and love of which in modern days . . . we can scarcely form a conception—high as he raised the dignity of his Lord above all things in heaven and earth—looking to Him as the Creator of all things, and the head of quick and dead, he does not speak of Him as 'equal to the Father,' or 'of one substance with the Father.' Much of the language of the Epistles (passages for example such as Rom. i. 2; Philip. ii. 6) would lose their meaning if distributed in alternate clauses between our Lord's humanity and divinity. Still greater difficulties would be introduced into the Gospels by the attempt to identify them with the Creeds. We should have to suppose that He was and was not tempted; that when He prayed to His Father He prayed also to Himself; that He knew and did not know 'of that hour' of which He as well as the angels were ignorant. How could He have said, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' or, 'Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me.' How could he have doubted whether 'when the Son cometh he shall find faith upon the earth?' These simple and touching words have to be taken out of their natural meaning and connection to be made the theme of apologetic discourses if we insist on reconciling them with the *distinctions of later ages*." ³

¹ *On the Interpretation of Scripture*, pp. 348, 350. ² *Ibid.* p. 353.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 354, 355.

ix. "Neither . . . would the substitution of any other precise or definite rule of faith, as for example the Unitarian, be more favourable to the interpretation of Scripture. How could the Evangelist St. John have said, 'the Word was God,' or 'God was the Word,' (according to either mode of translating), or how would our Lord Himself have said, 'I and the Father are one,' if either had meant that Christ was a mere man, 'a prophet or as one of the prophets.'"¹

x. "Is it admitted that the Scripture has *one and only one* true meaning? Or are we to follow the fathers into mystical and allegorical explanations? or with the majority of modern interpreters, to confine ourselves to the double senses of prophecy, and the symbolism of the Gospel in the law? In either case, we assume *what can never be proved*, and an instrument is introduced of such subtlety and pliability as to make the Scriptures mean anything. . . . That the present age has grown out of the mystical methods of the early fathers is a part of its intellectual state. No one will now seek to find hidden meanings in the scarlet thread of Rahab, or the number of Abraham's followers, or in the little circumstance mentioned after the resurrection of the Saviour that St. Peter was the first to enter the sepulchre. To most educated persons in the nineteenth century, these applications of Scripture appear foolish. Yet it is rather the excess of the method which provokes a smile than the method itself. For many remains of the mystical interpretation exist among ourselves; it is not the early fathers only who have read the Bible crosswise, or deciphered it as a book of symbols. And the uncertainty is the same in any part of Scripture if there is a departure from the plain and obvious meaning."²

xi. "Our object is not to attempt here the determination of these questions, but to point out that *they must be determined* before any real progress can be made, or any agreement arrived at in the interpretation of Scripture."³

¹ *On the Interpretation of Scripture*, p. 355.

² *Ibid.* pp. 368, 369.

³ *Ibid.* p. 370.

... "as the time has come when it is no longer possible to ignore the results of criticism, it is of importance that Christianity *should seem to be in harmony with them.*"¹

xii. "*Interpret the Scripture like any other book. . . . Scripture has one meaning—the meaning which it had to the mind of the Prophet or Evangelist who first uttered or wrote, to the hearers or readers who first received it.*"²

... "We are not . . . justified in supposing any *hidden connection* in the prophecies where they [*i. e.* prophetic symbols] occur. Neither is there any ground for assuming design of any other kind in Scripture *any more than in Plato or Homer.*"³

xiii. "Such a general conception of growth or development in Scripture, beginning with the truth of the Unity of God in the earliest books and ending *with the perfection of Christ*, naturally springs up in our minds in the perusal of the sacred writings. . . . Nowhere else among the teachers and benefactors of mankind is there any form like His [our Lord Jesus Christ's] in whom the desire of the nation is fulfilled, and 'not of that nation only,' but of all mankind, whom He restores to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God."⁴

xiv. "Is it a mere chimera that the different sections of Christendom may meet on the common ground of the New Testament? Or that the individual may be urged by *the vacancy and unprofitableness of old traditions* to make the Gospel his own—a life of Christ in the soul, instead of *a theory of Christ* which is in a book or written down?"⁵

xv. "The noblest study of history and antiquity is contained in it [Scripture]; a poetry which is also the highest form of moral teaching; there too are lives of heroes and prophets, and especially of One whom we do not name with them, because He is *above them.*"⁶

¹ *On the Interpretation of Scripture*, p. 374.

² *Ibid.* pp. 377, 378.

³ *Ibid.* p. 381.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 386, 387.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 423.

⁶ *ibid.* p. 428.

1. The differences as to the manner of interpreting Holy Scripture, are truly said by this writer to "run up at last into a difference of opinion respecting Revelation itself;" and this highly significant remark is accompanied by a dark and reserved allusion, after the accustomed manner, to "philosophical differences in the background."

2. "Free handling" is, in a somewhat peremptory manner, forbidden to the office of *interpreter*, in terms characterised by qualities the very reverse of "breadth" and "freedom;" reminding one of the contemptuous disregard shown by a late Cambridge Professor in his "Lectures on Divinity" for the whole race of "mystics." The "interpreter" is to *submit himself*, in a becoming spirit, to the rule thus magisterially laid down, and set himself to discover (if he can) the meaning of the words "as they struck on the ears or flashed before the eyes of those who first heard and read them." "Criticism" thus wills it. Now as the very first step in the process of interpretation, it is admitted by all that the true literal sense must, as accurately as possible, be discovered; but after such meaning has been obtained, what is next to be done? Is the "interpreter" to feel himself thenceforward bound by the iron, or perhaps leaden, rule of "one meaning," and for ever acquiesce in the merely natural conceptions of Judaism or Gentilism, as the case may be? It is, moreover, important to bear in mind, that uncertainty of Scripture interpretation, arising from the

partisan spirit in which it is so often entered upon, is at least as likely to occur in the case of "criticism," as in any other. Some of the most distinguished cultivators of this so-called science, in its more recondite forms, have furnished not a few of the most striking examples to be found in all literature, of superficial, one-sided, and even profane handling of the Sacred Book. It were to be wished that the ingenious Essayist had been a little more explicit as to the "deeper reasons" which have hitherto stood in the way of "the natural meaning of the text;" or that he had lifted, even in part, the veil of ambiguity, and exposed nakedly to view some of the "questions" to which he refers. It seems, however, a great breach of truth and charity thus dogmatically to charge theologians, in such sweeping terms, with bad faith. The sacred and honourable name of theologian belongs in no wise to those who are either unable or unwilling to welcome, on the one hand, the exposure of error, however old and venerable; or, on the other, the discovery of truth, however new and strange.

3. It might easily be shown, if this were the proper place, that there are many and great advantages, which mere *literal-sense* critics are wont to overlook, in the ancient primitive and Catholic custom of using the Creeds as interpreters of Scripture, especially on a subject so profound and sacred as the Divine *Oneness* of the Father and the Son: and there are signs not a few, and by no means to

be despised, that the Word of God—which, in accordance with St. Paul's teaching, is "spiritually discerned,"—will, more than at any previous time in the history of the Church, continue to be interpreted in a *double sense*, that is, naturally and spiritually; in obedience to the spirit and letter of the Divine declaration of the Lord Himself—"The Words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are *life*." The words, indeed, are in outward form *natural*, but in their inner essence *spiritual*; yea more—as *originally* proceeding from the Lord, they must be, in their inmost or supreme sense, DIVINE. It may be just as well to state, once for all, that this being the case, the "remonstrances" of those who advocate "one and only one meaning" are, in Divine Providence, destined to be for ever unavailing. The letter without the spirit—the "original meaning" real or supposed, without the spiritual and living sense—is like a body without a soul; and the time will surely come, when, to deny that the words of Hosea xi. 1, referred *backwards* to the redemption of the Israelites, and *forwards* to the advent of GOD-MESSIAH; to deny that the inspired Evangelist *understood* and applied them in their spiritual import when he wrote the words—"that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son"¹—the time, it may be safely as-

¹ St. Matt. ii. 15.

serted, will surely come, when to deny this will be regarded with horror and aversion, by a Church rejoicing in the pure light of the Word, and pronounced to be an open denial of revealed Truth. The time will come—to some extent *has already come*—when students of the Divine Word will search its pages neither for astronomy, geology, nor any other natural or mere worldly science; but for that which alone it was by infinite Wisdom provided to teach for all ages—the spiritual truths which pertain to man's regenerate life, and the eternal laws by which the Lord's Kingdom is governed in heaven and on earth. The time is at hand, when an attempt to impose on the *free study* of the Word, the carnal and blinding bondage of "the letter that killeth," will be regarded as the offspring of either hallucination or wickedness.

4. It is unnecessary to do more than direct the attention of the Christian reader to such assertions as that "there is no appearance in their writings that the Evangelists and Apostles had any inward gift," qualifying them for their sacred mission. Without explanation, such statements seem to deny the existence of the *supernatural in any form*, in the inspired narratives of our Lord's life. One single passage fairly considered in itself, and in its *infinite relations*, is sufficient to refute the above astonishing assertion—"He BREATHED on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." ¹

¹ St. John xx. 22.

5. To speak of inspiration as being "that idea of Scripture which we gather from the knowledge of it," seems either trifling with a most sacred subject, or something worse. At least a *second* answer is required from those who undertake to give a definition of inspiration.

6. All *well-established facts* of history or science will be found in harmony with a true theory of inspiration, when once that theory makes its appearance. Holy Scripture cannot be rightly interpreted apart from a previous admission, in general terms at least, of its *Divine origin* and *spiritual inner meaning*, any more than a man can say that Jesus is Lord (in the true and supreme sense of that term) but by the Holy Spirit.¹

7. It is indeed true—it were to be wished that the fact were more fully realized, as well by those who impugn as those who defend definite forms of doctrine—that "between Scripture and the Nicene or Athanasian Creed, a world of the understanding comes in." The same is true also of the Apostles' Creed—and even of a Reviewer's modern critical *preconceptions*, which are a peculiar kind of Creed in themselves, and too often disqualify him for pronouncing, on trustworthy grounds, at what particular theological *point* we have at this day arrived; or what the *whole* of Christianity was at any given time; or even to use the terms "friend and Lord" in refer-

¹ 1. Cor. xii. 3.

ence to GOD-MESSIAH, in their accurate Scriptural sense.

8. The "criticism" on St. Paul may be for the present passed over by remarking, that—as can be shown with abundant clearness from a number of places—the Apostle taught, *without reserve*, the supreme GODHEAD of our Lord. As will be seen in what follows, his teaching on this cardinal point, exactly coincides with the central doctrine of the Athanasian Creed. The difficulties raised by the Reviewer, as to what has been most unhappily called the "two natures" of our Lord, are great and manifold; but they are by no means so insuperable as is generally supposed. The subject, indeed, has in every age of the Church presented, to a certain class of minds, difficulties of the highest order. The Reviewer, however, has not ventured upon an attempt to throw a gleam of light on these difficulties. There is no indication that he is even conscious of their existence. By "critical" assumptions, easily made under the influence of certain opinions, he cuts the knot which he cannot untie, or else overlooks its existence altogether. The peculiar error into which he has fallen, prevents him from having a clear apperception of the profound questions which are involved in any *rational* consideration of the whole subject. One remark may be made as to taking "the simple and touching words out of their *natural* connexion." The obvious truth is, that this *must* be done by every intelligent and candid interpreter, in

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order that the doctrine which these words teach may be seen in its true *spiritual* connexion with a class of Scripture texts not referred to by the Reviewer, and which undeniably teach doctrines touching which he has everywhere maintained a remarkable silence. *Scripture alone can fully explain Scripture.* Obscure texts are to be illustrated by those that are plain, notwithstanding all "criticism" to the contrary; and although the Christian interpreter is under no *obligation* to reconcile these or any other texts with the distinctions of later ages, nevertheless, the perfect reconciliation of passages *apparently* teaching doctrines mutually repugnant, has now become, for the Church, *a necessity*; that she may be saved, if possible, from the abyss of superstition and infidelity towards which she is so rapidly advancing.

9. It is not improbable that the Unitarians, who may have read the passage from which the above extract has been [taken, and in which reference is so pointedly made to them, will regard this allusion to their "rule of faith" as savouring of irony. It is but just to remark, however, that the leading Unitarian writers have always conducted their great controversy with their orthodox brethren, touching the unity of God, in perfect good faith according to their lights. It is said *according to their lights*; for there are certain *data* necessary to be known before the Unitarian difficulties can be satisfactorily solved, and of these *data* they have hitherto been in ignorance. Their most intelligent writers are, indeed, well aware

that, apart from all scholastic and metaphysical puzzles, there are only three possible conceptions regarding the Person of our Lord. Either (1) He is GOD, in all the fulness of meaning which that term can include, as applied to the infinite Being of beings—the I AM ; or (2) He is a super-natural and super-angelic intelligence who had, in some peculiar mode, a form of being before the world was ; or (3) He is a mere man, highly exalted, a perfectly good man, a “unique man” (in the words of the author of *Ecce Homo*), to whom were applied from time to time in Holy Scripture, after the Oriental manner of speech, divers forms of figurative language of extreme boldness. These alleged hyperbolical modes of expression—however plain and obvious their meaning may have been to ordinary Christians in primitive times—the “critics” have permitted themselves to explain away, by conforming to certain “canons” arbitrarily decreed by themselves ; by carefully avoiding “double senses” and mystical interpretations ; and, especially, by resolutely denying the truth of the Christian axiom, that “God speaks not as man speaks,” and by interpreting the Scripture “like any other book.”

The Unitarians have, in truth, much reason to complain of such determined and obstinate reticence on points so important—especially on the part of those who assume to lead theological thought in “broad” directions, by “free handling” of subjects peculiarly liable to suffer by the repetition of con-

ventional language. They are, not unnaturally, astonished and pained at seeing men of high social and ecclesiastical position occupying—almost confessedly—what appears to be virtually the same theological stand-point with writers like John Taylor of Norwich, Andrews Norton, and William Ellery Channing; and nevertheless repeating, in the public worship of Almighty God, those very “orthodox” formulæ, the force and meaning of which, by their writings, they are doing their best to nullify.

10. The Scripture has, in general, two meanings at least—one natural or literal, the other spiritual; with this difference however between them—that the *spiritual* is the genuine and unchangeable meaning, which is clothed by the natural, just as *thought* is clothed in written or spoken language. *Lumen supernum nunquam descendit sine indumento.*

It is a grave mistake, moreover, to suppose that the age has outgrown *mystical* methods of interpretation; and there is a little too much dogmatic confidence in the assertion, that no one looks after hidden meanings in what certain verbal commentators are pleased to regard as, “the little circumstances” recorded in Holy Scripture. Already there exists a new and daily increasing class of Biblical students, who are so primitive in their notions, and adhere so rigidly to *literal* interpretation as to believe on Divine Authority that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for *one tittle of the*

Law to fail; and who, moreover, believe in the *plenary* inspiration of such "little circumstances" as that of St. Peter coming "first to the sepulchre." They even venture to offer reasons for the hope that is in them, which "critics," if logical and consecutive in their modes of reasoning, would find it difficult to resist, except by denying altogether the existence of the supernatural in the sacred narratives—the common refuge of defeated rationalists. They even believe, that notwithstanding all that "criticism" has said to the contrary, it can be proved that Divine Providence has so preserved inviolable the text of the Sacred Book, that even when some rash critic—at his own proper peril—arbitrarily rends in pieces the literal or mere outward sense, the inner spiritual heavenly meaning is preserved "safe and sound;" just as that inner tunic "*without seam, woven from the top throughout*" was, unwittingly on their part as to the prophecy, kept whole by the rough Roman soldiers who divided among themselves the Lord's outer garments. "That the Scripture might be fulfilled. . . . These things, therefore, the soldiers did." So much for "little circumstances."

11. It was scarcely necessary to state, that the determination of certain questions referred to by the Reviewer, is an essential condition of real progress in Biblical interpretation. A prior question, however, is—who are to be the judges? Are the "critics" to be allowed tacitly to assume an office and powers

similar to that of a Roman Congregation of the Index? Even were they in general agreed as to the principles of their own "science," who will acknowledge their authority? Estimated by results, "criticism" ought rather to be ignored and shunned. In almost every case it has proved a "light that leads astray." In attempting to build up their own tower of Babel, the indestructible Word of God ever confounds their language, "that they may not understand one another's speech." There is no intention, by these remarks, to disparage the results of *sound learning* any more than those of Lexicography, or any other form of external Biblical aid. Such helps are of great value in their own department. In the interests, however, of truth and religion, a protest ought to be made against the baseless assumption that mere critics, grammarians, or lexicographers, are, *as such*, qualified to decide peremptorily on questions which belong exclusively to the respective domains of philosophy and theology. It is but just to add, that by no class of thinkers will the principle here contended for be more clearly recognised; by none has it been sustained more ably, continuously, and consistently—notwithstanding what must be regarded their shortcomings in other respects—than by the distinguished *liberal* theologians of the Roman Catholic communion. It is sufficient to mention, in this connexion, the single-hearted, saintly, but persecuted author of the *Recherche de la Vérité*, and the noble band of distinguished Christian thinkers who still, in the

face of appalling obstacles, strive to keep alive among the great French people and clergy the sacred fire of a spiritual and heavenly philosophy and theology.

12. *The Bible is a divinely supernatural Book.* In this respect, notwithstanding the apparent ruggedness of its style, it is unique. It *cannot*, therefore, be interpreted like any other book. "For my *thoughts* are not your thoughts, neither are your ways *my ways*. [This is] the *oracular utterance* of Jehovah."¹ It has, then, infinite meaning—meaning for men and meaning for angels. It is established *in the heavens*.² It records events which a superficial and irreverent criticism regards as a by-gone history, but which the angels desire to look into. This denial of hidden connexions in the prophecies—whatever may have been intended—is, nevertheless, in fact, tantamount to a denial of the Divine origin and inspiration of the Word. Who is this critic that he should, in contravention of the plain and reiterated declarations of eternal Truth, venture to deny the existence of supernatural and Divine *design* in the prophetic utterances of the Sacred Book—these *ways and thoughts* of JEHOVAH of which it is written:—"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts?"³

13. This statement as to "development" in Scrip-

¹ Isa. lv. 8. נָחַם יְהוָה, *dictum vel oraculum* JEHOVÆ. The Auth. Vers. fails here to give the full meaning.

² Psa. cxix. 89

³ Isa. lv. 9.

ture, the manner in which our Lord is spoken of, and especially the text of Scripture adduced, are all characterised by the usual well-known *suppressio veri* of the Socinian argument against our Lord's Supreme Divinity.

14. It is a chimera to hope for union in Christendom on the common ground of the New Testament. The only hope of such union is in a more widely spread acknowledgment of the *fact* that the spiritual truth of the Old Testament is revealed in and by the New ; and in a corresponding recognition of the Lord's Divine Humanity as the all in all of the Word of God. His Life, *as written in the Book*, is the unique medium appointed in the order of Divine Providence, for giving that life "more abundantly" to all men. His words are "spirit and life."

The "instrument"¹ by which the Scripture, especially since the Reformation, has been made to mean anything or nothing, is that very rule of "Criticism," which, without warrant and at its own pleasure, restricts the infinite spiritual meaning of Scripture to one — and that the *natural* — from which, as the facts of Church History prove, have been deduced all kinds of fallacies, and every form of heresy, and falsity. By this "instrument" it is, that to a deplorable extent, the Word of Life has become for so many, both clergy and laity, as "a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument."

¹ See preceding Extract, No. x.

15. This passage contains another of those delusive statements of the Socinian type, incompatible with any rational and sincere belief in the Old Testament as being in truth, *in some sense*, the Word of God. The Bible history, antiquity, poetry, when viewed from their origin and inner sense, obviously cannot be considered mere human records. They are rather the *containing* vessels, the mean adopted by Infinite Wisdom of giving here on earth a fixed and definite form to heavenly and Divine Truths. They are, in a word, *vehicles* of spiritual light. The heroes and prophets were so many types and symbols of Him who is not merely above them; but who, dwelling "far above all heavens," is their Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, Lord and God, in His own Divine-Human Person. These things are utterly hid from a "criticism" that is wise and prudent in its own eyes; but they are revealed unto babes.

IV. Extracts from Dr. Colenso's *Natal Sermons*.

i. "God's ancient people, Israel, taught, though they were, by men divinely inspired . . . had but very low and limited notions of His true nature, of His essential glory. They might be said, like Moses, while hidden in the hollow of His Hand, to behold the back parts of their God, while His Glory passed by: but this very conception of such an interview of the Divine Majesty . . . resembles other notions of pious men in those early times, who *supposed that Jehovah appeared in human form*, and walked, and talked, and argued, and even ate and drank, with mortal men,—as when, for instance, we read—

Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and

seventy of the elders of Israel ; and they saw the God of Israel : and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand : also they saw God, and did eat and drink.¹

“ All these are indications of the exceeding rudeness of their ideas respecting Him,—signs that they still beheld Him through the veil of ignorance and superstition, though not so dense as that of the nations round them. It was the childhood of the world, the childhood of the Church,— To us, people of the 19th century such conceptions of the God of all the earth, would be impossible. . . . His word was heard continually in the hearts of His saints and prophets, moving them to put their trust in Him, to fear and to obey Him,—saying to one, ‘ I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,’—to another, ‘ Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage ; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed ; for the Living [? Jehovah] God, thy God, is with thee whithersoever thou goest.’ ”

ii. “ For though these narratives *may not be real histories*, though words such as these may never have been spoken by the actual voice of the Almighty audibly in the ears of Abraham and Joshua,—though we may have here only the *conceptions of pious writers, filling up from their own imaginations the outlines of the early annals of their race*,—yet still in the hearts of these very writers there must have been a Divine Life beating, there must have been a holy trust and fear and love, the result of close communion with God, the fruit of many teachings by His Spirit, which enabled them to conceive such words, as *the expressions of their own deep thoughts* and to utter them forth, as prophets of God, in the ears of their fellow-men.” ²

iii. . . . “ ‘ No man hath seen God at any time.’ Surely

¹ Exod. xxiv. 9—11.

² *Natal Sermons*, Second Series, pp. 319—321.

meditation upon these words will show us that the vision of Christ's bodily form, however worthy of love and reverence, is not that manifestation of God which we are to look for. He has revealed God by his teaching,—by his own life of filial faith,—by his death, in which he witnessed for the truths which he taught,—and not only thus, for others also in different ages have taught the truth and have sealed it with their blood,—but by that holy fellowship in which he bound all his disciples to himself, as the *Brother* of all and the dear Son of God, that they might also be bound to one another, through him, as brethren of one another, and children of God,—‘heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ,’ —‘Sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.’”¹

iv. “It is well to remember also that the Son of Man has taught us . . . to realize the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men, as children of God, not by dogmas and definitions, but by simply assuming it as the basis of all he did and said, as the principle of his own holy, self-sacrificing life.”²

v. “In not a single instance does St. Paul pay worship to Christ, either by ascriptions of praise or by offering of prayer. He offers all praise and prayer to God—to God in Three Persons, *it may be*, in certain places, and therefore including the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity;”³ . . .

vi. “I do not examine the Book of Revelations, because that is a book of ecstatic visions, which gives us no example of the common daily practice of Christians—a book also, which . . . was not recognised as canonical, &c. . . . But throughout the rest of the New Testament, wherever we find the actual practice of living men, in no single instance is worship addressed in the form of *prayer* to Christ, and only once in the form of *praise*—namely at the end of the Second of Peter—

¹ *Natal Sermons*, Second Series, p. 322.

² *Ibid.* p. 325.

³ *Ibid.* p. 145.

“ ‘But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory, both now and for ever. Amen.’ ”¹

“ “there can be little doubt that the Second Epistle of St. Peter is not a *genuine* writing of the Apostle, but one of those numerous productions of the early time of Christianity, which were put forth—with pious motives, no doubt, very many of them, but with the greatest injury to the cause of truth—in the name of the Apostles, and even of Christ himself. Looking, therefore, at the universal language of the New Testament, and at the actual practice of the Apostles both in the Acts and in their genuine epistles, it can scarcely be doubted that this *solitary* ascription of worship to Christ—
 is a sign of *development*,—a sign that the Christian Church was already leaving the simplicity of Christ’s own teaching, and the example of the Apostles, and, as Pliny tells us at the end of the first century, was ‘singing hymns to Christ as to God.’ ”²

vii. . . . “the whole book [*Hymns Ancient and Modern*] overflows with words of prayer and praise, directly addressed to Jesus, such as find *no example or warrant* in the lessons of our Lord himself, nor in the language of his Apostles.”³

“It is quite another thing to offer our prayers to God *in the name of Jesus*. For this we have Scriptural direction and apostolic example, abundantly, and we have also the authority of the Liturgy of our own Church. It is true, indeed, that in some places of our Prayer-book, especially in the Litany, there are words of prayer addressed to Christ himself, &c. . . . And there are *two* collects in which the same phenomenon occurs, &c. . . . But the *whole spirit* of the Prayer-book is against the practice. There are a *hundred and eighty* collects and prayers altogether; and of this whole number two only (or it may be three) have this peculiarity, to which may be added a third short form in the Service of the Visitation of the Sick.”

¹ *Natal Sermons*, Second Series, p. 148. ² *Ibid.* p. 149.

³ *Ibid.* p. 150.

"I repeat, therefore, that the whole spirit of our Prayer-book—as well as the teaching of our Lord and the practice of his Apostles—is opposed to the practice which is rapidly growing in our day . . . of offering *direct worship* to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Scotch Church nothing of this kind appears in its authorized book of Psalms and Hymns for Public Worship."¹ . . .

"Our own Cathedral Hymn-book contains 90 Psalms and 60 Hymns, in which, it has been said, the name of Christ or Jesus does not appear. Of course in the 90 Psalms it could not, and in the 60 Hymns it does not, any more than it does in the Hymns of the Scotch Hymn-book to which I have just referred; though reference is made to the Person and Work of Christ, as in the Evening Hymn, and to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, in various places."²

1. In what sense is the term "divinely inspired" used in this passage, may fairly be asked by an ordinary reader. The Israelites, it is true, had most debased conceptions of the Divine Being. It is plain from their history that they thought of Him as idolaters did of their deities: for they were themselves, for the most part, idolaters in heart. It was, however, owing to this very fact of their spiritual degradation, among other causes, that they were *chosen* from among all other people to carry on the eternal *designs* of Jehovah God with respect to the human family. The real question—for some reason or other, evaded by the writer of this extract—is not whether the Israelites entertained rude ideas of God; but whether, *as a matter of fact*,

Natal Sermons, Second Series, pp. 150, 151.

² Ibid. p. 152, 153.

God did in truth—and not by a representative fiction like that above noticed—openly and sensibly, in some peculiar manner, reveal Himself to man, as recorded again and again in His Word.

2. It is in truth difficult to conceive how a teacher of Christianity could bring himself thus deliberately to throw doubt on the veracity of the Sacred narrative, as this Prelate has here done. It is still more difficult to believe that one who could write in such terms, had ever made a solemn vow in presence of his Creator, the Lord God Omnipotent, to “faithfully exercise himself in the Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer, for the true understanding of the same, so as to be able to teach and exhort with *wholesome Doctrine*, and to withstand and convince gainsayers.”

To any unsophisticated mind it must appear evident, that to throw doubt on what may be called the spiritual or supernatural part of Exodus xxxiii. 18—23, in which is given a dim and arcane manifestation of the *Ancient of Days*, is, by necessary implication to cast doubt upon the entire history of the Old Testament from the call of Abram onwards. The same may be said of the “criticism” of Exodus xxiv. 9—13.

Is it a fact, or is it not, that “these histories” are *real*? Is it a fact, or is it not, that Jehovah God *spake* to Moses the words which Moses, his servant, *declares* to have been spoken to him by Jehovah God? The question here is not as to *interpretation*

of the narrative, or even as to modes of conceiving *how* such manifestations of Deity could take place—but simply as to matter of fact. Do “these histories” record facts or fictions? A *criterion* is needed. Who is to furnish it?

The most wary language of scepticism, as used by *professed* teachers of the Christian Religion, must in the end be a failure. Writers of the class here referred to, would do well to take a lesson in plain dealing from the Unitarians, who have advocated a cause substantially similar to that espoused by Dr. Colenso, and, to their credit be it said, with great learning, clearness of view, candour of expression, piety, and Christian spirit. In all their writings there is an admirable openness and straightforwardness, the total absence of which—on certain essential points—in the writings now under consideration, is most deeply to be regretted.

On what ground, it may be asked, is it asserted that a Divine life was beating in the hearts of writers who represented as real histories and addresses from Deity, what it is here so confidently alleged could not have been such? What kind of communion with the Divine Being was that which led men to believe *the phantasies of their own rude minds* to be the very words of God himself; and which led them to fill up “*from their own imaginations the outlines of the early annals of their race?*” Are incoherent fancies such as these, which contravene in the most explicit terms the express declara-

tions as well as the manifest scope and purpose of God's Word written, to be regarded as specimens of the *results* obtained by studying Holy Scripture under the "supreme" guidance of the so-called "third great teacher, Conscience?"

3. The Lord Jesus Christ in His own Person, it is alleged, was not a real manifestation of God—was not GOD-WITH-US in strictness of language—but a different and inferior being *sent by God* to reveal His will by teaching and Example. This notion is in clear contradiction to the Lord's own express declaration—"He that hath *seen Me* hath *seen the Father*." It is further asserted that He is not God Almighty, but "the Brother of all." There seems no difference whatever between this theology and that contained in the preamble of the movement known as the "Free Christian Union."¹ The truth of this view will, perhaps, appear more evident from what follows.

4. It is also asserted—in contradiction to St. Paul's uniform teaching, as understood in accordance with the *principles* laid down by the inspired Apostle himself—that this supernaturally enlightened "Hebrew of the Hebrews," who counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his LORD, in other words, as he well knew, the ADONAI JEHOVAH of the Old Covenant—did not pay worship to Christ. It is,

¹ See *New Affinities of Faith*, p. 18.

indeed, admitted, *as possible*, that he did offer prayer to God in "three Persons." It seems impossible to read this skilfully conceived oracular deliverance of the Bishop, and not be reminded of the awe-inspiring words of JEHOVAH declared by the ancient prophet :—"Is not *My Word* like as a fire ? saith the Lord : and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces ? Therefore behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness ; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them : therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD."¹

5. The Book of Revelation, which, if acknowledged to be Divinely inspired, would destroy the non-Christian hypothesis of "no prayer to Christ," is conveniently *assumed* to be a book of ecstatic visions, and would seem to be regarded by this writer as not canonical, and therefore useless for theological purposes.

6. To dispose of an awkward passage in favour of ascribing "*glory both now and for ever*" to our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Epistle of St. Peter is virtually rejected—in accordance with the usual practice of a certain class of writers in such cases.

¹ Jerem. xxiii. 29—32.

The allusion to "development" is instructive for many reasons which need not here be specified.

7. *Hymns, Ancient and Modern*, are condemned, on the same gratuitous hypothesis, as abounding in words of prayer and praise *directly* addressed to our Lord.

There is, indeed, some show of argument in what is adduced in favour of the Bishop's view, owing to the manner in which, unhappily, the devotional part of the Book of Common Prayer has been constructed. It is a genuine satisfaction to find agreement with the Bishop possible, even in a single instance, as to his statement of *facts*. It is said that of *one hundred and eighty Collects*, only a few present the "phenomenon"—possess the "peculiarity"—of being addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ AS GOD. A sufficient acquaintance with this subject, and with the *collateral* questions which it involves, leaves no room for doubting that, *according to the sense in which the Prayer Book is commonly understood and taught*, the Bishop is triumphant as against his adversaries generally. How does it happen, it may fairly be asked, that the majority of the Prayers are addressed to the Father, and almost none to the Son, although He is declared in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds to be GOD in the highest sense, and in the second Article to be VERY GOD? It may also be asked why, in common opinion, a practical Arianism and Socinianism are said to prevail to a large extent among both the clergy and laity of the English

Church? And why is it possible, in a Church professing to be Primitive and Catholic, that Arian and Socinian tenets, *on this cardinal point*, can be almost openly avowed to an extent so alarming? What, it may be asked, is to check the progress of this new movement avowedly directed against the supreme adoration of our Lord? These are the questions which it has now become a necessity for the English Church to answer plainly and categorically. *They involve a theological discussion in which Western Christendom is deeply concerned.*¹

The open and candid consideration of this subject of "Prayer to Christ" cannot much longer be deferred: and notwithstanding all that has been suggested to the contrary, the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity and even that of the Trinity *enters deeply into it*. The current of events will force this fact upon the attention of those in authority in the Church. It is utterly impossible, in these days—in a Church and country where intellectual and religious freedom exists as in England—to long continue the use of prayers in which, according to the above-mentioned views, we

¹ "The general rule is, that a Collect is addressed to God the Father. Pope Benedict XIV. quotes Cardinal Bona's statement, that only a few Collects are expressly offered to the Son, and none to the Holy Spirit; partly because the Eucharistic worship has regard to the Sacrifice offered to the Father by the Son. It is observable that the Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent, which in the Gelasian Sacramentary addresses the Father, in the Gregorian is more happily transferred to the Son; in our version it has resumed its old form."—Bright on *Ancient Collects*, p. 201.

call THE LORD "our brother," while at the same time we confess in the Creeds that He is ALMIGHTY GOD. Whatever may be the upshot of the theological conflict which is rapidly drawing near, the cause of Divine Truth is certain to gain. It is not unreasonable to hope that the result will be a still clearer and higher recognition, in the Church, of the supreme Divinity and glorious majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings, Lord of lords, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the Almighty—and with this recognition, the triumph of Christianity in a still purer, nobler, and more quickening form.

V. Extract from *Ecce Homo*.

"All virtues perpetuate themselves in a manner. When the pattern is once given it will be printed in a thousand copies. This *enthusiasm*, then, was shown to men in its most consummate form in Jesus Christ. From him it flows as from a fountain. How it was kindled in him who knows? 'The abysmal deeps of personality' hide this secret. It was the will of God to beget no second son like him."
"Living examples are, as a general rule, more potent than those of which we read in books. And it is true that the sight of very humble degrees of Christian humanity in action will do more to kindle the Enthusiasm, in most cases, than reading the most impressive scenes in the life of Christ. It cannot, therefore, be said that Christ is the direct source of all humanity. It is handed on like the torch from runner to runner in the race of life. Still it not only existed in Christ in a pre-eminent degree, but the circumstances of his life and death gave him pre-eminent opportunities of displaying it. The story of his life will always remain the one record in which the moral perfection of man stands revealed

in its root and in its unity, the hidden spring made palpably manifest by which the whole machine is moved. And as, in the will of God, this unique man was elected to a unique sorrow, and holds as undisputed a sovereignty in suffering as in self-devotion, all lesser examples and lives will for ever hold a subordinate place, and serve chiefly to reflect light on the central and original Example.”¹

In this passage from a well-known work, there is manifest a still farther declension from the teaching of THE WORD, and the faith of the Primitive Apostolic Church. The language used to describe what others believe to be the operation of Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom in a human form, must be called irreverent. “Enthusiasm in the Example,” “unique man,” and the heterogeneous mass of notions, of the coldest and extremest Socinian type, with which this artfully written book abounds, can never become part of the language of *sincere Christian piety* in any religious communion. Nor will Christians in general accept this new form of dogmatic theology as final—on the *ipse dixit* of the author of “*Ecce Homo*.” To characterize the operation of infinite goodness and truth in the Person of the INCARNATE JEHOVAH as “enthusiasm;” to assert that He is not the “direct source of all humanity;” to speak of Him as an ideal of moral perfection distinct from God, and as *merely* “the central and original Example;” will appear to those who believe in His supreme

¹ *Ecce Homo* (2nd Ed.), pp. 321, 322. Cf. Extracts from *Essay on The Education of the World*, Nos. i. and iv.

Godhead, as so many daring forms of speech in which the highest revealed truth is plainly, *in fact*, though not in so many words, denied.

The attempt to survey "the life and works of Jesus Christ"—observing at the same time a careful and systematic reticence as to the well-known, specific, antecedent declarations concerning His advent which pervade the Old Testament—to speak of our Lord, in what may fairly be called extreme non-Christian language, as a "young man of promise," and "an historical character," was not without reason deeply offensive to the common consciousness of Christian readers—who had always regarded THE LORD, as in some sense, the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. The attempt, as might have been expected from the peculiarity of its stand-point and its method, is a notable specimen of theological castle-building, possessing the attraction of novelty, suited to the prevalent loose mode of thinking on such subjects, and a natural result of the new method of freely handling the Scriptures, so recently introduced for the edification of benighted English Christians. The very first sentence in the book is in contradiction to the entire teaching of the Bible as to the Person and Office of the Lord.¹ It contains a mistake so gross and palpable as to indicate, that the mind in which it was conceived is in a state of

¹ "THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH sprang from a movement which was not begun by Christ."

radical theological disorder. It affords an instructive instance of the kind of fallacy, common a few centuries ago amongst some of the most enlightened philosophers of the time—that of insisting that the earth was flat because *to them it obviously appeared so*. “Judge not according to *appearance*, but judge righteous judgment.” The learned, ingenious, and eloquent writer had not sufficiently learned this lesson, and accordingly commenced his clever book by falling headlong into a pitfall of his own making, from which he never once emerges.

Appeal may be made, in support of these strong assertions, to the writings of such candid and self-consistent reasoners as the author of *New Affinities of Faith*, and the school of thought of which he is the most distinguished representative. It ought to be perfectly well known to all who undertake to handle such subjects, that the Unitarian writers of the present century, living and departed, have *completely exhausted* one phase of this great question concerning our Lord’s Person. Their exposure of the Tritheism involved in the prevailing orthodoxy, has been complete and permanent. Their reasonings on certain *special points* have never been answered, and are now generally either shunned or admitted. They have shown, by abundance of convincing argument, that the real gist of the discussion lies in one question—is the Lord Jesus Christ the Supreme and Eternal God? Is divine worship and prayer to be directed to Him AS GOD? Until this point be finally settled,

progress in theology, progress towards Christian union, are impossibilities.

VI. Extracts from *New Affinities of Faith*.

"There is an extensive loosening of belief in the 'schemes of salvation,' which Protestant Churches are constructed to administer; an uneasiness in preachers, who cannot enforce them without consciously refining them away, and in hearers, to whom they bring no real conviction; a mutual understanding to lower the standard of religious veracity, and not ask too much sincerity in profession or in prayer. It is no longer an insult to a clergyman's honour, but rather a compliment to his intelligence, to suspect him of saying one thing and believing another: while the layman who need say nothing uses a right of reticence which no earnest conviction ever claimed."¹

"The different feeling towards this name [that of *Christian*], the clinging to it, the shrinking from it, is a *fact* too deeply grounded to be ignored. . . . Mr. Newman thinks it an indispensable condition of a purer religion to remove the authority of Jesus Christ. Many who love and honour him plead for the very same religion on the authority, or as embodied in the life, of Jesus Christ. Surely it is in the interest of their common mission, as servants of Divine Righteousness and Love, that he and they should pursue it with characteristic instruments and on separate tracks."²

"It is perhaps a remnant of Mr. Newman's early orthodoxy, that he takes the word [Christian] '*as commonly understood*,' and shuts up within it all the accepted creeds³ Is it the 'orthodoxy' of Rome or of Geneva, of the Deanery of St. Paul's or the Deanery of Westminster, of the second century or the sixth or the sixteenth, which has the right to keep the keys of the Christian name, and open and shut it at will? At what point in the scale of doubt does the

¹ *New Affinities of Faith*, p. 8. ² *Ibid.* p. 29. ³ *Ibid.* p. 30.

excommunication take effect, and the 'enmity not unjust' begin? May the Doctrine of the Mass be questioned, but not the Real Presence?—or the Real Presence, but not the Trinity?—or the Trinity, but not the Incarnation?—or the Incarnation but not the Messiahship? And as to matters of history, what may the critic take, and what must he leave? May he remove the dates, only not the things dated?—or the Flood, but not the Fall?—or some of the miracles of the Old Testament—as those of Joshua and Jonah—but none of the New? Make what selection you may, it must be simply arbitrary, denying for the future the very principle of change which has landed you in the present.”¹

“Is it not notorious that in England ‘a total change of judgment, equivalent to a religious revolution,’ is actually taking place, and disposing to ‘spiritual union’ those who could never approach one another before. During periods of fermenting thought and rapid change, the old hard lines of theological division variously bend and shift and melt away in the minds of living men, long before they give any sign of softening on the written creeds. How many men remain ‘orthodox’ enough to listen without restiveness to the dam-natory clauses of the Athanasian Creed? And if, without abandoning the doctrine of the Trinity, they would take its excommunication off, what is to hinder their religious recognition of persons who cannot accept the formula?”²

The subject here so warmly and earnestly discussed is one with which no serious and honest mind can afford to trifle. The general and obstinate reticence respecting it, on the part of the Clergy of all grades, seems fairly to warrant the stinging reproach of want of *earnestness of conviction*.³ In some of the extracts given above, it is but too evident that plain speaking is shunned by the

¹ *New Affinities of Faith*, p. 31. ² *Ibid.* p. 36. ³ *Ibid.* p. 8.

most ingenious distortion of language. Let the *truth* be plainly spoken. Are the terms Lord, God, Judge, King, Saviour, Redeemer, for example—when applied to the Lord Jesus Christ in His *now* glorified humanity—to be understood in a restricted, subordinate, temporary sense; or in a supreme, absolute, and infinite sense? An honest and candid reply to this question would remove numberless difficulties on both sides, and reduce the subject under investigation to the consideration of *this single all-important point*. To the final consideration of this issue, which includes all that is of essential consequence in the controversy, sooner or later, the Church must come. As an object of supreme worship, there is *no medium* between infinite Deity and a created being. This the modern Unitarians of all shades of opinion have long since clearly seen. The thinking *rational* mind must here make its choice. The Lord God the Saviour Jesus Christ, in His entire Personality, *must* be regarded as being either a creature or the Creator. There is, for the rational mind, when enlightened by the Word,—*no middle term*.

Consciously or unconsciously, an attempt seems now being made to introduce one of the well-known phases of Unitarian belief into the Church of England; and, strange to say, its authorised prayers are adduced in defence of the attempt. Hitherto the movement has been much disguised under a peculiar dress half Platonic, half rationalistic. Of late, some of the outer garments have been thrown off. Its

progress and success mean the destruction of the English Church.

Whatever may be the result of the effort to establish what is called a "Free Christian Union," its promoters have taken a candid and honourable course. One of their number, in the extracts above given, has declared, with admirable freedom and clearness of expression, his views of the state of Anglican Theology. His strictures on the character of the clergy for veracity are not altogether unworthy of their attention.

There exists at present, beyond all doubt, what may be called a "religious revolution." A *new order of things*, in some form, must follow. There is a deplorable want of earnest, intelligent, religious conviction, both in public and in private. There is, in many minds, deep and determined hostility to the Athanasian and every other Christian formula. Sincere and reverent minds are, in a high degree, perplexed by the surprising forms in which both orthodoxy and heresy have presented themselves for acceptance. The question is naturally asked, in reference to the Church, where is the limit of doubt and disbelief—within the pale of professed Christianity?

VII. Extracts from Miss Martineau's translation of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*.

"During the whole course of my long task, it has appeared to me that Comte's work is the strongest embodied rebuke ever given to that form of theological intolerance which cen-

sures Positive Philosophy for pride of reason and lowness of morals. . . . The theological world cannot but hate a book which treats of theological belief as a transient state of the human mind. . . . The law of progress is conspicuously at work throughout human history. The only field of progress is now that of Positive Philosophy, under whatever name it may be known to the real student of every sect;¹

The above passage presents an instance of "progress" passing beyond the very utmost borders of even the most nominal Christianity. Divine Revelation is deliberately and in express terms rejected. Inquiry has at last reached the very confines of *death and the grave*. It is worthy of notice, however, that a *Creed* cannot be dispensed with even here. The formula of the disciples of "progress" emulates in brevity that of Mahomet. The only field of progress, in the view of this writer, is *now* that of the "Positive Philosophy." Taking all the circumstances of the case into account, this is one of the most startling confessions of faith on record. Denial of a Deity in any form, or under any conception, and of course denial of an infinite superintending providence in the affairs of men; denial of the supernatural, the spiritual, heaven, hell, good and evil properly so called—and the acknowledgment of mere *entia rationis* called "laws" as governing brute matter—this is the very region and

¹ *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (Ed. 1853), pp. xiii. xv. Preface.

abode of "eldest night and chaos." By a mental movement, apparently gradual and easy, the sentimental abstraction invoked as Deity under the name of "Divine Righteousness and Love,"¹ is exchanged for the fantastic conceptions of an atheistical biological philosophy. *Intellectual error*, of whatever kind, in connection with any creed or religious system, Christian or Gentile, is comparatively reasonable by the side of the deep and dire *falsity* of which this is a specimen.

VIII. Extracts from *The Classification of the Sciences*, by Herbert Spencer.

i. "As the progress of thought is one, so is the end one. There are not *three* possible terminal conceptions; but only a *single* terminal conception. When the theological idea of the providential action of one being is developed to its ultimate form, by the absorption of all independent secondary agencies, it becomes the conception of a being immanent in all phenomena; and the reduction of it to this state, implies the fading away, in thought, of all those *anthropomorphic attributes* by which the aboriginal idea was distinguished. The alleged last term of the metaphysical system—the conception of a single great general entity, *nature*, as the source of all phenomena—is a conception identical with the previous one: the consciousness of a single source which, in coming to be regarded as universal, ceases to be regarded as conceivable, differs in nothing but name from the consciousness of one being, manifested in all phenomena. And similarly, that which is described as the ideal state of science—the power to represent all observable phenomena as particular cases of a single general fact, implies the postulating of some ultimate existence, of which this single fact is alleged, and

¹ See *Affinities of Faith*, p. 29.

the postulating of this ultimate existence involves a state of consciousness indistinguishable from the other two.”¹

ii. “I conceive . . . that the object of religious sentiment will ever continue to be, that which it has ever been—the unknown source of things. While the *forms* under which men are conscious of the unknown source of things, may fade away, the *substance* of the consciousness is permanent. Beginning with causal agents conceived as imperfectly known; progressing to causal agents conceived as less known and less knowable; and coming at last to a universal causal agent posited as not to be known at all; the religious sentiment must ever continue to occupy itself with this universal causal agent. Having in the course of evolution, come to have for its object of contemplation, the Infinite Unknowable, the religious sentiment can never again (unless by retrogression) take a Finite Knowable, like Humanity, for its object of contemplation.”²

1. Mr. Herbert Spencer intrepidly carries on this work of “progress” in the shadowy realm of metaphysical abstractions. The truly human conception of a Personal Deity whose essence is infinite Love and infinite Wisdom, is exchanged for the phantasm of “a being immanent in all phenomena.” The process by which the “terminal conception” of the writer is arrived at, deserves the special attention of those who may feel disposed to advocate the principle of a mere speculative “anthropomorphism.” To arrive at the “conception of a being immanent in all phenomena,” Divine Providence must be denied; all the “anthropomorphic attri-

¹ *Classification of the Sciences* (1869), pp. 35, 36.

² *Ibid.* p. 41.

butes" of the theologians must in thought *fade away*. The "metaphysical" method yields a conception identical with this—"a single great general entity, *nature*." Lastly, "science" postulates an "ultimate existence," to which all observable phenomena are to be referred. These three results—(1) a being immanent in all phenomena; (2) a metaphysical entity called "*nature*;" and (3) a postulate of science called "ultimate existence,"—are, in consciousness, declared to be virtually one. These "ideal" states of theology, philosophy, and science, meet in—"nature." *Facilis descensus Averni*.

2. This "graven image," the "ideal" of modern science, and none other, is to be the "object of religious sentiment." With unscientific and unphilosophic, and more than "ideal" hardihood, this mere abstract phantasm is asserted to have ever been the object of religious sentiment—the *unknown* source of things. But "abstract notions can do nothing."¹

As the result of all this elaborate and serpentine "progress" over the ruins of the noblest and purest forms of human thought—owing to the destruction in their own minds of all those heaven-derived ideas which alone can enlighten, refine, elevate, and purify the naturally disordered mind of man—such worshippers find themselves at last not very far removed

¹ *Butler's Anal.* Chap. vi. Part I.

from those Athenians who, with an ignorance perhaps far more excusable, paid their devotions at an altar raised to the unknown God. Thus in wonderful ways do extremes sometimes meet. In presence of such infatuation the Christian will exclaim, in the words of the Psalmist: "The fool hath said, *in his heart*, there is no God."¹

IX. Extracts from Prof. Huxley's Paper in *Fortnightly Review*.

i. "It is only at a later stage of intellectual development that the intelligence of man awakes to the apparent conflict between the anthropomorphic and what I may call the physical aspect of nature, and either endeavours to extend the anthropomorphic view over the whole of nature—which is the tendency of theology; or to give the same exclusive predominance to the physical view—which is the tendency of science; or adopts a middle course, and taking from the anthropomorphic view its tendency to personify, and from the physical view its tendency to exclude volition and affection, ends in . . . the 'metaphysical' state, &c."²

ii. "In the progress of the species from savagery to advanced civilization, anthropomorphism grows into theology, while physicism (if I may so call it) develops into science; . . . But as the ages lengthen, the borders of Physicism increase. The territories of the bastards are all annexed to science; and even Theology, in her purer forms, *has ceased to be anthropomorphic, however she may talk*. Anthropomorphism has taken stand in its last fortress—man himself. But science closely invests the walls; and Philosophers gird themselves for battle upon the last and greatest of all speculative problems. Does human nature possess any free, volitional, or

¹ Ps. xiv. 1.

² Prof. Huxley in *Fort. Rev.*, June 1869, p. 662.

truly anthropomorphic element, or is it only the cunningest of all Nature's clocks? Some, among whom I count myself, think that the battle will for ever remain a drawn one, and that, for all practical purposes, this result is as good as anthropomorphism winning the day."¹

iii. "If there is one thing clear about the progress of modern science, it is the tendency to reduce all scientific problems, except those which are purely mathematical, to questions of molecular physics—that is to say, to the attractions, repulsions, motions, and co-ordination of the ultimate particles of matter. Social phenomena are the result of the interaction of the components of society, or men, with one another and the surrounding universe. But, in the language of physical science, which, by the nature of the case, is materialistic, the actions of men, so far as they are recognisable by science, are the results of molecular changes in the matter of which they are composed; and in the long run, these must come into the hand of the physicist. *A fortiori*, the phenomena of biology and of chemistry are, in their ultimate analysis, questions of molecular physics. Indeed, the fact is acknowledged by all chemists and biologists who look beyond their immediate occupations. And it is to be observed that the phenomena of biology are as directly and immediately connected with molecular physics as are those of chemistry. Molar physics, chemistry, and biology, are not three successive steps in the ladder of knowledge . . . but three branches springing from the common stem of molecular physics."²

1. In accordance with the well-known speculations of this writer—always expressed with characteristic clearness, terseness, and boldness—the above passage declares what he regards as the central point of opposition between the respective tendencies of theo-

¹ Prof. Huxley in *Fort. Rev.*, June, 1869, pp. 663, 664.

² *Ibid.* pp. 665, 666.

logy and science—in other words, between the elevating and purifying worship of a *spiritual revealed God*, and a blind and degrading devotion to an unknown entity called *nature*.

2. It is, to say the least, unscientific to *assume*, as is here done, in a spirit of overweening confidence, “the progress of *the species* from savagery to advanced civilization.” Neither on the established principles of true science, nor in accordance with the acknowledged rules of sound reason, has *the proof* of this purely speculative notion been attempted. The very *data* for its rational investigation are to be sought in a sphere which transcends that of mere science in its highest form. There are not wanting wild and baseless hypotheses on this subject, which all careful and cautious thinkers will for ever hold in abhorrence ; and which are, moreover, utterly destructive of that highest, most certain, and most precious, of all ideas—one absolutely perfect God. There is a secret, but infinitely powerful influence, which has its origin in a superior and transcendent sphere of being, always and everywhere acting on the minds of men ; tending to inspire them, in so far as their power of reception permits, with the idea of God as A PERSON—the one idea which alone can render man, in strictness of language, truly *human*. Some trace of this breath of heaven is seen among all races of men, in some perverted form or other ; but it has been reserved chiefly for a so-called progress of scientific thought in modern times, and in the

midst of Christian influences, to endeavour to extinguish this "light that lighteth every man," and to reach a depth of mental degradation unknown to the lowest savages. Far otherwise has ever been the language of the profoundest and most subtle investigators of nature, the most cultivated of philosophers, the wisest of theologians: "Stupendissimus est omnium rerum in Mundo et triplici regno ordo et nexus: fluunt omnia a fine per fines ad finem. Universalissima etiam in particularissimis est Providentia, cujus in argumentis percensendis est loquacissimam linguam infinitate rerum ad silentium agere; cui satius est ideo stupescere, quam turbatæ et obrutæ nimiis hiscere. Nihil est in Cœlis, nihil in Terris, quod non manifestissimis signis Numinis providam præsentiam ostentat; ut qui nihil videt in omnibus, *cæcior sit talpa, et vilior bruto.*" . . .
"Hoc solum clare pervideo, quod Ordo naturæ sit propter fines, qui fluunt per universam naturam, ut redeant ad primum: et quod *cultores naturæ sint insani.*"

There is no discussion here with those who write openly against theology, or the supernatural, and who deny the existence of *the spiritual* in man. Assertion is placed against assertion. No other course is open. Theology awaits with calm confidence the verdict of future ages. In the meantime let the votaries of naturalism know, that the "borders of Physicism" cannot truly increase, without at the same time laying the deep and lasting foundations of

still more solid and majestic superstructures in the philosophical and spiritual order. Science, so called, is sure sooner or later to be found guilty of intruding into regions which do not of right belong to it. Many of the so-called "bastards," such as Psychology, will be discovered to be of noble parentage—prodigals on whose return to their true home, the fatted calf will be killed. Let them also know that Theology, in her purest and highest form, will be sure to find a home somewhere among true men—will become ever more and more *anthropomorphic* as the cultivators of science and philosophy become more *human* in the highest sense of the term; and that the most potent and exalted of all humanizing forces will proceed with ever-increasing energy from the DIVINE ANTHROPOMORPHISM which constitutes the very life of all true Theology—the divine doctrine of the GOD-MAN.

3. *Humanity proper* must have well-nigh perished before the notion can become generally prevalent that the greatest of all speculative problems will be whether a man be a *man*, that is, an organ of *will*—or a *thing*; or that human beings are compound material molecules set in motion by a fictitious entity called "nature." Such may be the day-dreams of a few peculiar thinkers; but truly rational men will never confound the Heaven-born philosophy of *Life and Spirit*, with the science of "molecular physics," even in its most subtle and recondite forms. The recognition of the *prior* position of the

supernatural in the order of being—implied in the name itself—will subsist as long as man is man. “A *machine* is inanimate and passive ; but *we* are AGENTS.”¹

Enough, and more than enough, has been adduced in the preceding pages, to warrant a safe conclusion as to the true character, tendency, and results of what may be regarded as the most vigorous and methodical movement of the rationalistic thought of the present day in relation to theological opinion. This movement presents two distinct but not wholly unconnected phases—the one, *essentially*, what is commonly called Unitarianism ; the other—into which unhappily it has an inherent tendency to pass—Nature-worship. In the one case, is worshipped an unknown God, represented by “*the man Christ Jesus* ;” in the other, an idol abstraction, which, it is assumed, is to be for ever the equally unknown “object of the religious sentiment,” called *Nature*, from which has been carefully removed every vestige of what is human, and in which even a gleam of intellectual light, a breath of religious warmth—proceeding from the glorious, ennobling, and transforming idea of one spiritual Creator, *in whose image man was originally made*—has no abiding place.

With non-Christians, then, that is, *theologically* speaking, with those who deny in express terms the

¹ Bp. Butler, Pref. to *Sermons*.

facts of the Lord's supreme Divinity, the Divine inspiration of the Word, and, in general, the supernatural, there is no controversy in these pages. Christians, apart from Holy Scripture, have no final ground of argument or appeal. If *this* is not believed in, neither would a voice from the dead. The passages which have been selected from various writers confessedly on the confines, or outside the pale of the Christian Church, are intended merely to *illustrate* the manner in which certain erroneous fundamental principles in theology tend to naturalistic Atheism.

With the publicly recognised teachers of Christianity in a Reformed Church, however, the case is very different. They at least *profess* to believe that the Word of the living God is the fountain of Divine Truth. In general they admit that the foundations of religious belief are to be sought for in the Word. If, however, the foundations be *removed*, what can the righteous do? There are, at present, in Anglican theology, numerous clear and unmistakeable signs of such a removal. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do *in the end thereof?*"¹ Never was it more necessary than now to ponder the pregnant words of Bengel:—"Scriptura Ecclesiam sustentat: Ecclesia Scripturam custodit. Quando viget Ecclesia, Scriptura splendet:

¹ Jer. v. 30, 31.

quando Ecclesia ægrotat, Scriptura situm *contrahit*. Itaque Ecclesiæ Scripturæque facies simul vel sana solet apparere vel morbida : et Ecclesiæ constitutioni subinde respondet *tractatio* Scripturæ.”¹

It seems impossible for any unprejudiced mind, possessing the most general acquaintance with the subjects involved, to read consecutively the few extracts given above from the writings of Christian clergymen, and not perceive that their inner tendency is plainly hostile to any admission, in a genuine sense, of the supreme Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and, moreover, that, substantially, they advocate the Arianism or Socinianism of the last century—held in some unaccountable manner, together with, and in manifest opposition to, Articles and Creeds which in the clearest language flatly contradict and condemn the *characteristic principle* of those false systems.

If there be an essential of the Christian Faith at all, it is certainly a belief in the One living and true God. If a Church have specific functions of any kind, one, beyond all doubt, is to declare in plain terms what the Supreme object of worship is. From whatever cause arising, the fact is certain that it is now no longer possible to say that the Church of England is at unity with itself in reference to the object of worship and the source of Divine Truth. The GODHEAD of our Lord is doubted ; the *Divine* inspiration of the Word is explained away. This

¹ *Gnom. Nov. Test.* Pref. § 5.

position cannot apparently be distinguished from the ordinary Unitarian stand-point, as the following passage will clearly show.

"I shall need no apology," says Theophilus Lindsey, in his honest, pious, and touching *Apology, on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire*, "for producing the following important and apposite passage from LACTANTIUS":—

" 'When God saw the wickedness of men, and that the worship of false Gods prevailed over the whole earth (for his own people the Jews had not been true to him), he sent his Son on an embassy to men, to convert them from their various impious and false worships, to know and worship him the true God, and also to turn them from folly to true wisdom, from iniquity to righteousness. These are the ways of God, in the which he commanded him (his Son) to walk. These the precepts, which he gave him to keep. And he was faithful to God. For he taught that God is One: that he only is to be worshipped: *nor did he ever say that he himself was God*: because he would not have been found faithful, if when sent to destroy the worship of many gods, and assert the worship of One alone, he had brought in another besides that One. This would not have been preaching the One God, and doing the work of Him that sent him, but his own work, and withdrawing himself from Him whom he came to declare. And because he was so faithful, and assumed nothing to himself, intent only on fulfilling the commands of Him that sent him; therefore he was rewarded with the dignity of an everlasting high-priest, the honour of a supreme King, the authority of a judge, and *the name (or title) of God.*' "¹

The opinions here frankly and artlessly expressed,

¹ *Apology*, pp. 122, 123. The passage is taken from Lactantius, *De Vera Sapientia et Religione*, l. iv. p. 198. (Ed. 1774.)

are in all respects similar to the moderate, or what may be called the High Unitarianism of Price, Taylor, Norton, Ware, and Channing. They differ in no important particular from the views contained in the extract from Dr. Arnold's letter already referred to. The same principles also pervade several of the extracts given above. There is, *on the cardinal point in question*, no essential difference, except perhaps the decreasing tone of piety and reverence in the "handling," until it reaches the lowest and coldest point in *Ecce Homo*.

Now it is evident that matters cannot long stand in such a position as this. If a compact is to be made with the prevailing public opinion of the day, which, not knowing what it is doing, denies, in a variety of forms, the proper and absolute Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ; let it be made openly, and not secretly. It will then be the part of those who cannot enter into any such compromise, to consider what course, under the circumstances, is best to be adopted.

It cannot be too strongly urged upon those immediately concerned in this matter, to whichever side they may belong, that Unitarianism, aided by the increasing intelligence of the age, has put an end to much of what is commonly understood by the term orthodoxy—especially its fierce and anti-Christian Calvinistic forms—for ever. The vulgar doctrine of the Trinity—practically equivalent to three deities—owing its origin mainly to a misinterpretation of the Athanasian Symbol—has, for a large number of

professing Christians, become well-nigh a thing of the past. No intelligent theologian any longer believes in the crude Reformation doctrine of "salvation by faith alone;" or in Calvinistic election and reprobation; or in the blood of Christ appeasing the wrath of the Father; or in the exclusion of unbaptised infants from heaven; or in a thousand other prodigious perversions of Divine Truth. Opinions such as these have, by their pernicious influence, mainly helped to bring about no inconsiderable part of the reasonable perplexity and honest scepticism of this age; and yet to question them, on the part of the clergy, would, in comparatively recent times, under certain circumstances, have been attended with most disagreeable consequences. Again and again it has been asked, Where is the destructive process to end? What limits are to be placed upon the aberrations of so-called Christian teaching? What authority is to mark the utmost bound of speculation in matters theological?

All, except the Unitarian party, will perhaps be disposed to admit, that the destructive process within the Anglican Church has proceeded already quite far enough. The Bishop of Natal might possibly desire the complete removal of the few "phenomena" still remaining in the Prayer Book, which show that worship is, *as yet*, paid to the Lord Jesus Christ, in its highest form. Creeds dutifully and obediently "read in our hearing, by the order of our Church,"¹ and then categorically denied, and the

¹ *Natal Sermons*, p. 329.


truths they teach ignorantly condemned in language which may not here be characterised as it deserves—such Creeds of course stand in the way of “progress,” and would receive no consideration at the hands of this Bishop. Conduct like this presents a painful contrast to the upright, manly, self-sacrificing course, of which the case of the ex-Vicar of Catterick furnishes a noble example. The present “Policy” of a certain party in the Church is calculated to develop rapidly the destructive process. It is to be feared that not until it has proceeded still farther, will the Church of England be made fully aware of her real position. *What she most of all needs, is a thorough-going recension of fundamental theological principles, by duly qualified persons.* When is the beginning of such a work to be hoped for?

Meanwhile, an attack is about to be made upon an essential principle of the faith, through the medium of the Athanasian Creed. Doubtless her most devoted and loyal members see clearly, that at least *one* fundamental truth of Christianity is in imminent danger. It is because this view is strongly held by the writer that the present defence of the Creed was undertaken, and not from any interest felt in it, on its own account, as a Confession of Faith. Some of its clauses expressly declare the Godhead of our Lord, *in the highest sense*. It is, therefore, in this respect, (to use the words of the great Luther), “a Bulwark to the Apostles’ Creed,” which, owing to a variety of causes, has now come to be generally understood in

a thoroughly Unitarian sense. If a sincere acknowledgment of the true and absolute Godhead of the Lord be *necessary to the existence of the Christian Church*, then it is plainly an act of suicide, to permit the removal of the Athanasian Creed without an *equivalent* in some form.

The following exposition, whatever it be, will be found capable of sustained and continuous proof from the entire Word of God. In the sense here given, an honest subscription to the *truth* of this Creed is possible. Each of its clauses is seen to be susceptible of a clear, definite, consistent, rational meaning. *Thus understood*, "it may be thoroughly received and believed; for it may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." What is worth noting also—the exposition will show that, thus understood, the late attempt to consider it a forgery is an unwarrantable slander; and that the doctrine of the Double Procession is a Divine Truth indispensable to a genuine belief in the Trinity; also that touching this doctrine the Western Church is right, and the Greek Church wrong.

The interest of the writer in this Creed, then, is mainly due to the strong conviction that, in the present state of the Church, its removal will only serve to precipitate its utter ruin *as a Church*. The attempt to get rid of it, viewed in another aspect, may be seen to be merely a means of preparing the way for the open recognition of Arian and Socinian teaching, which, as experience shows, must in due



time as certainly desolate the Church, as it has already laid waste the daily diminishing sect which still clings to the name of Unitarian.

Unitarianism has made an honest and successful protest against the practically Tritheistic worship of the Christian Church, and several of the false principles derived from this arch-heresy. With close and cutting logic based upon the plainest facts, it has once and again exposed the mass of absurdities which flow, as a natural consequence, from the vulgar theology. It must not be forgotten, however, that it has not attempted to build up any thing on the ruins it has made. As a Destroyer, its victory, among the *thinking* portion of the Christian community, has been complete. It has never yet assumed the form of Healer or Restorer. It has never, with some rare exceptions, addressed itself to the real difficulties which pertain to theological problems, as connected with the facts and truths of Divine Revelation. Too often, in a spirit lamentably wanting in moral courage, breadth of view, and true spiritual insight, it ignorantly and irreverently cuts those theological knots which it feels itself unable to unloose.

The special work of the Church is the solution of the principal difficulties, which, in the presence of modern ideas, beset theological truths. A glorious and priceless opportunity is now presented to the English Church. She can, if only she will, bear witness with a new power and energy in behalf of the two pillars of

the Lord's Church on earth—the Divine Inspiration of the Word, and the Divinity of our Lord in all fulness and completeness, as made known in His glorified Humanity. This she can do by a deeper, broader, and more *spiritual* understanding of revealed Truth. Thus armed with "the sword of the Spirit, which is *the Word of God*," she might become one of the mightiest forces on earth for opposing and subduing, both within and without her pale, those errors born of darkness and evil, which, under forms so subtle and various, are gradually preparing the way, at the same time, for the sudden revival of almost decaying superstitions, and the extensive development of an infatuated nature-worship. Thus armed she might be able for ages to "stand against the wiles of the devil;" and wrestle successfully "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the *darkness* of this world, against *spiritual wickedness* in high places." ¹

If she would but learn, in this *her day of visitation*, what belongs to her Peace, she has *at hand* the means of teaching in the clear light of truth itself, the heavenly doctrine of the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity, in ONE GOD *over all blessed for ever*; and this, moreover, in such a form as to silence all but fanatical gainsayers, and convince all who are willing, in humility and reverence, to submit to the continuous teachings of Holy Scripture, and the rule of right reason.

¹ Eph. vi. 11, 12.

THE WORD OF GOD.



The ONE sacred Book of the Christians, the Holy of Holies in the Church, "the most valuable thing which the world contains,"¹ is The Word of God.

Whether it be regarded in its origin, its contents, or its design—it is the one purely and absolutely heaven-derived gift bestowed upon man, according to an order altogether Divine; the unique bond of immediate and intimate connection between man—the finite creature—and his infinite Creator and Lord. In the *truths* of that Book, the Wisdom of the infinite One finds its lowest and last expression, in merciful condescension to the natural state of man in this world. The heavenly light of those truths is, in itself, no other than the spiritual clothing in which that glorious and awful Form of Divine Majesty veils itself as with a garment. The primary cause of the perpetuity of the Church is the continuous revelation of that Word; that so by it there may be a communion of the Church on earth with the Church in heaven.

The ground on which the Church of England

¹ Coronation Service.

bases the obligation which it lays on its faithful members thoroughly to believe and receive the *Three Creeds*, is, that these documents of primitive doctrine may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture. In every divergence of opinion as to their true meaning and intent, the final appeal must always be to the clear and undoubted teaching of God's Word *written*. From this *alone* all their authority, as forms of belief and instruments of religious instruction, is in the last resort to be derived. Nothing contained in them is to be regarded as binding or loosing in matters spiritual, except what may be authorised, attested, or in some way reasonably justified, by the teachings of Holy Scripture.

On this clearly defined basis all principles involving points of doctrine must ultimately *be seen to rest* ; otherwise they are to be accounted of no theological force or value. The Divine Word, then, holds the *chief place* in the constitution of the English Church.

It is of the utmost consequence to place this fundamental fact clearly and unmistakably in view of the reader : for it is the hinge on which the whole controversy turns as between the claims of the Papacy, and the principles of the Reformation. The full recognition of this fact, on the part of the clergy, is the first step to victory over honest and intelligent scepticism ; and the sphere of discussion with the enemies of revealed truth is thus reduced to fixed and definite limits.

The Church, it would seem, is called upon to enter

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anew upon the defence—not of this or that school of opinion—but of a common Christianity, on a principle almost forgotten by some, and repudiated by others—the Bible and the Bible only the religion of Protestants. The value of this Primitive Apostolical and truly Evangelical position, has, to a considerable extent, been surrendered to the enemy, partly through ignorance and indifference, partly through a growing disloyalty to the principles of the Reformation.

The Anglican Church, at least, cannot with impunity ignore it. To do so would be to destroy her own surest foundations. This is easily and conclusively shown thus :—

“*HOLY SCRIPTURE containeth all things necessary to salvation*: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation.”¹

“The Three Creeds, *Nicene Creed*, *ATHANASIUS’S Creed*, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles’ Creed*, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by *most certain warrants of HOLY SCRIPTURE*.”²

“The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the *pure WORD OF GOD* is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.”³

“The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is *contrary to*

¹ Art. VI.

² Art. VIII.

³ Art. XIX.

GOD'S WORD *written*, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so *besides the same* ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation."¹

"General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed by the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared *that they be taken out of HOLY SCRIPTURE.*"²

In the office for the *Making of Deacons*, the Bishop puts the following questions to the candidate :—

"Do you unfeignedly believe *all the* CANONICAL SCRIPTURES of the Old and New Testament ?

"*Answer.* I do believe them."

In the office for Ordering of Priests, the Bishop further demands :—

"Are you persuaded that the HOLY SCRIPTURES contain sufficiently *all* Doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ ? And are you determined, *out of the said Scriptures*, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be *concluded and proved by the Scripture ?*

"*Answer.* I am so persuaded, and have so determined by God's grace.

"Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish

¹ Art. xx.

² Art. xxi.

and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines *contrary to God's WORD?*

Answer. I will, the Lord being my helper.

"Will you be diligent in Prayers, and in *reading of the HOLY SCRIPTURES*, and in *such studies as help to the knowledge of the same*, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?"

Answer. I will endeavour myself so to do, the Lord being my helper."

In the form of ordaining or consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop, the Prelate Elect is required to submit to a strict and searching examination "in certain Articles, to the end that the Congregation present may have a trial, and bear witness," how he may be minded to behave himself in the Church of God. The Archbishop demands:—

"Are you persuaded that the HOLY SCRIPTURES contain sufficiently *all* doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined *out of the same* Holy Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge; and to teach or maintain nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be *concluded and proved by the same?*

Answer. I am so persuaded and determined, by God's grace.

"Are you ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine *contrary to God's WORD*; and both privately and openly *to call upon and encourage others to do the same?*

Answer. I am ready, the Lord being my helper."

The present *state and practice* of the Church compared with these truly rational, liberal, and

genuine Christian principles, prove incontestably that *somewhere* there exists some deep and awful evil and wrong.

If language have any meaning (although it would appear that the ingenuity of modern times has discovered that, in the matter of subscription it may have *none*, and some are not ashamed openly to avow the opinion) these declarations place it beyond all doubt, as a *matter of fact*, that the Divine source and supreme criterion of doctrinal truth is THE WORD OF GOD and that only. By this principle the Church of England must stand or fall. It is this which pre-eminently distinguishes all Reformed Churches from the Papal Communion; and from this circumstance they deserve, in strictness of terms, to be called *Churches*. Here, then, and nowhere else, is to be fought the great battle for the supremacy of Divine Truth over weak or wicked human perversions of it; for genuine intellectual and spiritual freedom; for the establishment and progress of the Lord's kingdom on earth.

The Bible was not intended to be blindly believed in, but to be *understood* in its own Divine Light. *Common notions* respecting the Bible must undergo, to a very considerable extent, profound, and in some cases, essential modification.

The study of the Scriptures, hitherto, has been for the most part the study of a mere human book with an unknown divine element in it: but what that element really is, and where it resides, no one

pretends to say. The *principle*, moreover, on which a distinction between the Divine and human elements should rest, and in the light of which their mutual relation and connexion might be seen, is not desired by those *who stand most in need of it*—the clergy. Because various “theories” have proved to be false and dangerous, it is most unreasonably assumed that no genuine theory is possible. The fact remains, however, that THE WORD has generally been studied under the influence of fanciful, ever-changing, “critical” hypotheses; not (with some rare exceptions) “in spirit and in truth” as veritably *the supernaturally revealed expression* of infinite Love and infinite Wisdom. As might have been expected, its sacred truths have been, in various ways, perverted and rejected; and as a consequence of this, cardinal points of doctrine, which, in the order of Divine Providence, the Creeds were intended to preserve, have, for some, lost all theological value. The general result is, the present distracted and wretched state of religious opinion, on the most sacred and vital subjects. Science and Philosophy, instead of being what they were divinely intended—handmaids to Theology, have been turned into deadly instruments for the production and dissemination of a degrading and abominable naturalism, in which the true meaning of the term *man* is lost, and the insane phantasy is cherished, that the being, made in God’s image and endowed with immortality, is destined to be commingled and confounded with the beasts that perish,

and *personal identity* annihilated amid the dead forces of Nature. These are among the manifest signs of a retrogression to barbarism.

There is 'no sovereign remedy for this state of things, but a deeper and clearer *understanding* of the Word. Recourse must again be had, but in a new method and spirit, to those *oracles* in which alone is Life.¹ Here alone are the foundation-facts, and first principles of Theological Science. The experience of many centuries has conclusively proved, that no dependence whatever is to be placed on Councils or ecclesiastical assemblies of any kind, apart from the clear and express teachings of the Word—"the Sun of Wisdom;" from the study and interpretation of which each person must for himself, in the last resort, derive the doctrine of Faith and Life—not, indeed, from the dead paper and letters, but from Him who, by those letters, is *revealed* therein. He, who alone is the Light of that WORD, the Lord Jesus Christ, must, in the study of it, be approached directly and immediately, in His Divine-Human Person, as the God who is *revealed* in its inspired pages, without the intervention of doctor, priest, patriarch, or pope.

Who, it may well be asked, are these self-styled infallible Councillors who claim power over the souls and bodies of men—who unblushingly assert, that they *alone* possess the keys of the Eternal Kingdom?

¹ Acts vii. 28.

Are they not the enthusiastic votaries of a manifold superstition, engendered during ages of gross spiritual darkness and comparative barbarism? Are they not, in some cases, the bold and unscrupulous emulators of the all-grasping dominion of old Pagan Rome—the too successful imitators of its gentile ritual, its selfish, worldly, moral principles, its temporising and cruel political practices? Have not Councils decreed that a weak, ignorant, fallible, and—in some instances—atrociously wicked man, was to be believed in and venerated by “the faithful” as the *vicar* of Him who possesses “all power in heaven and on earth?” Have they not canonised dead men? Have they not decreed that saints are to be invoked in prayer as so many subordinate deities? Have they not established the authority of indulgences? Have they not determined, in the most direct contradiction to the express terms of the Divine Institution and Command, the *division* of the Eucharistic elements? In one of the most remarkable anti-papal protests which have appeared in Europe since the Reformation,¹ a line of argument has been adopted which disposes effectually and for ever of the arrogant assumption of *Papal* infallibility. All that now remains to be done, is to extend the principle, and the lucid reasonings, of this ably and honestly written book, to the question of the infallibility of Councils, and to the assumption of even *Primacy* on the part of

¹ *The Pope and the Council*, by Janus. Rivingtons, 1869.

the Roman See, in order to put an end, in due time, to this ancient anti-christian strife to be "accounted the greatest;" and thus to prepare the way for learning the lesson of Divine humility contained in that marvellous utterance—"I AM in the midst of you *as one that serveth*."¹

One of the most singular and striking coincidences of modern papal and rationalistic thought, may be seen in the attempts made to derogate from the supreme authority of the Divine Book. "Not a dead book but a living Person" exclaims the enthusiastic rationalist. "Not a dead book but a living, teaching, personal, infallible authority," urges the ardent devotee of papal claims; and yet the Lord's Divine Work on earth, from its commencement to its close—in all its minutest particulars—was the fulfilment *to every jot and tittle* of what was written in THE BOOK concerning Himself:—

'And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, *which were written* in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning ME. Then opened He their *understanding*, that they might understand THE SCRIPTURES, and said unto them, Thus *it is written*, and thus it behoved the Christ² to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached *in His name*,³ among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."⁴

¹ St. Luke xxii. 27.

² *i. e.* God-Messiah.

³ *i. e.*, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in His Divine-Human Person. Cf. St. Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

⁴ St. Luke xxiv. 44—47.

Moses, according to the Divine injunction, wrote the words of the law in A BOOK, until they were finished.¹ The command of Jehovah to Joshua was—

“THIS BOOK of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do *according to all that is written therein.*”²

In the closing verses of the New Testament, THE BOOK is brought prominently in view of the reader under circumstances of the highest solemnity and responsibility. “For I testify unto *every man* that heareth the words of the prophecy of THIS BOOK, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: And if any man shall take away from the words of THE BOOK of this prophecy, God shall take away his part *out of the book of life*, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in THIS BOOK.”³

Thus it is that the Word of God is, according to its own teachings, the most holy thing on this earth. To treat it irreverently and contemptuously, is a form of profanity which recoils with terrible power on the inner life of him who is guilty of it, notwithstanding what he may think to the contrary. To *confirm the mind* in such a state and habit, is *the same thing* as to deprive the transgressor of his “part in the Book

¹ Deut. xxxi. 24.

² Josh. i. 8.

³ Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

of Life"—to incur, in a Scriptural and spiritual sense, the penalty of everlasting death.

The words of our Lord to the unbelieving, profane Jews, who sought to kill Him because He made Himself equal with God, have in these days unhappily a wide application—

“Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed ME: *for he wrote of Me*. But if ye believe not *his writings*, how shall ye believe MY WORDS?”¹

Belief in the Lord, in any real and proper sense of the term, is utterly impossible to the man who denies the truth and integrity of the Mosaic writings. Such denial is substantially a rejection of the Christian Faith. Belief in *Creeds* of any kind under such circumstances, is of course not to be expected. A radically erroneous estimate of the character of the Word, and a want of acquaintance with its true design and scope, as well as with its inner and genuine meaning, have, in the lapse of time, given rise to a total misconception of the precise and compendiously expressed doctrines contained in the Creeds, and which were suited to a bygone age; and this misconception has reacted disastrously on the interpretation of the Scriptures. Involved in all this error, moreover, was the original idea of what essentially constitutes a Universal Church. On this subject, strange as it may seem, by far the greater part of the Christian world have yet to learn “which be the first principles of the oracles of God.”² As a

¹ St. John v. 18, 46, 47.

² Heb. v. 12.

preparation for the admission of this grand and quickening idea into the general mind, it behoves the partisans of a narrow and exclusive Christianity to form clear notions, first of all, of such simple, reasonable, charitable, heavenly doctrines as the following :—

i. The Lord's kingdom on earth, in other words, His Church, must, from the circumstances of the case, exist in various external forms ; and have diverse conceptions of Revealed Truth. Although each separate religious communion professes to derive its tenets from Holy Scripture, and individuals, even in the same Christian Society, differ widely in their opinions ; still all this need be no barrier to Church Unity, provided Christians be at one *in willing and doing what is good and right*. All such differences ought to be tolerated, in so far as they are not incompatible with the integrity and peace of the Church. The notion of Papal Unity, and every imitation of it in the Reformed Churches or elsewhere, is not only chimerical, but also tends necessarily to the violation of Christian truth and charity.

ii. The self-denying, upright, holy life of a Christian, who, in so far as he is able, loves the Lord and his neighbour, is a recipient of the divine blessing here and hereafter—no matter to what religious communion he may happen to belong, and independently of all merely human confessions of abstract doctrine, however true in themselves.

iii. There is a mere outward formal worship ; and

there is also an inner worship "in spirit and in truth." The votaries of the former are hypocrites; and, in the Divine sight, such worship is vile and abominable. Those who cultivate the latter, are children of God; and are to be found in every form of Christianity—*nay even among the Heathen.* Who these are individually, and to which class they truly belong, is certainly known only to Him who knows what is *in man.*

iv. At the head of all doctrines stands *one* which good and true Christians of all Communions acknowledge implicitly in every act of obedience and love to God their Saviour, but which, as yet, is little known among theologians from any clear, definite, and rational idea—viz. *that the glorified Human Form*, in which our Lord Jesus Christ now reigns as God over all, blessed for ever, is DIVINE—not merely human and finite, as commonly supposed, but, in all the fulness of meaning of the terms, DIVINE and INFINITE.¹ This truth ought to be the primary doctrine of all Christian Churches.

v. The Christian Religion has at least two essential principles, which are these:—

(a) The Humanity of the Lord is Divine.

(b) Love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbour, do, in strictness of speech, constitute the Church-principle in the life of man.

¹ The principal design of these pages is to show, that this greatest of all truths is, as a matter of fact, the cardinal doctrine of the Athanasian Creed, when that formula is fully and clearly understood.

vi. All love of spiritual and heavenly things, all zeal for God's Church, except in so far as they are influenced, implicitly or explicitly, by these two principles, are either spurious and illusory, or else false, hypocritical, and wicked: the sincere and humble worship of the heart and life, on the other hand, will be accepted from *all men*, by the Eternal Father of the Ages, whose "tender mercies are over all His works;" but, the absence of such worship, when it arises from human perverseness and evil, and is continuously persevered in during man's earthly state of existence, inevitably results in spiritual death, or, what is the same thing, everlasting condemnation.

vii. In so far as the Church is concerned, no genuine Christian doctrine can be obtained from any other source than the Divine Humanity of our Lord, through the medium of his Word.

Principles such as these appear to be absolutely necessary to the formation of a Church deserving to be called Universal or Catholic, in a strictly Christian sense. They are, unfortunately, but little in accord with the common views of any considerable party, either in the Church or out of it. The peculiarities of the age, however, are in many respects favourable to their dissemination among sincere and earnest Christians of almost every school. There are not a few signs that *the fig-tree is about to put forth leaves; and that the summer, although yet far off, is coming.*

The Athanasian Creed, as commonly interpreted,

cannot otherwise appear, to anyone who thinks, than as, on the whole, unintelligible, self-contradictory, and practically Tritheistic.

Numerous extracts might easily be adduced from the writings of various distinguished theologians in support of this statement.

It is also to be noted, that by its defenders and impugnors alike, a candid and thorough-going investigation of the meaning and bearing of its specific teachings, has hitherto, for the most part, been neglected or shunned. It has, in modern times, come to be regarded with suspicion and aversion by all but the adherents of certain theological schemes. It is proper to add, that no systematic attempt of any value has been made—outside the liberal schools of Roman Catholic theology—to investigate, and, if possible, place in a clearer light, *the various collateral philosophical problems* to which a careful study and analysis of its principal clauses inevitably give rise. Its explanation is despaired of; and thus the way is being rapidly prepared for its entire rejection from the Formularies of the English Church. This cannot summarily be done, however, without involving the most serious consequences. To call it a forgery—as has recently been done, and that, apparently, in the interests of a foregone conclusion which in itself is false—is a proceeding more than audacious. It is a double wrong—one to the Creed, another to Divine Truth.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that a document

whose origin is involved in considerable obscurity, should have been received as *Œcumenical* by the whole of Western Christendom. It possesses, indeed, no authority but what it is believed to derive from Holy Scripture ; it is, nevertheless, not allowable for those who possess only a very superficial acquaintance with its true contents, to reject and malign it. It is, in truth, much more capable of a reasonable and satisfactory explanation than is generally supposed.

It has, hitherto, always been considered one of the primary functions of a *living teaching Church* to furnish its members with some brief summary of the chief articles of the Christian faith.

It is a principle of the highest importance that "no Church has power to alter, or to add to, the terms of Gospel-salvation as laid down in Scripture ; or to *keep back from its members* anything revealed in Scripture ; or to encourage, or willingly leave them, in ignorance of it. For its very office is, in the words of Christ Himself, to 'teach them to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded.'" ¹ The same courageous and sagacious thinker further observes :—"It is indeed, allowable, and proper, that a Church should employ, for the instruction of its people, convenient Summaries and Expositions of Scripture doctrine, such as Catechisms, &c. But then, these catechisms, &c., must contain the very doctrines of Scripture, and none other.

¹ *Lessons on Religious Worship*, by Archbp. Whately, p. 134.

And the same rule applies to Forms of prayer and to Creeds." ¹

It would seem, that, notwithstanding, the ancient method of teaching, and of testing the qualification of theological teachers, by means of Creeds, is likely to undergo modification. Be this as it may, the exposition here given of the Athanasian formula will show, that, in the present state of the religious world, it cannot lightly be set aside. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that its permission in the Church was at the first intended by Him who said to His disciples, "I am with you alway, even unto the consummation of the age," to be the means of preserving the Faith from the destruction which would have certainly followed the adoption of the Arian heresy. It must be confessed, however, that as *now* understood, it has ceased to perform this service. It is, then, as a matter of course, "giving offence."

It may, nevertheless, be shown, at least in a general way, that notwithstanding all that has been written against this ancient, and evidently carefully drawn-up formula, it *agrees* with the express teachings of Holy Scripture, provided its terminology be properly understood.

There exists, unhappily, a strong prejudice, especially among some of the clergy, against any attempts to render more intelligible and practical certain spiritual truths which they have been accustomed to regard

¹ *Lessons on Religious Worship*, by Archbp. Whately, p. 134.

as inscrutable mysteries. These truths have never yet been explained ; and it is supposed, therefore, that explanation is impossible. They are, it is said, to be believed only by "faith." An illustration of this summary method of dealing with theological difficulties, appeared lately in the accredited organ of one of the most influential educational Institutions connected with the Church in this country. In a critical notice of a letter, which had appeared in a well-known evening newspaper advocating liberal opinions, under the title of "What is a Religious Education?"—among a number of wise and judicious observations on the views expressed in the letter, the following remarkable confession is made:—

"The mysterious and adorable doctrine of the Holy Trinity can be understood by a lad of twelve years of age as readily as by a man of eighty ; that is to say, if we use the word 'understood' in its exact sense. 'Sanctify this water to the *mystical* washing away of sin.' Can a man of eighty years understand this better than a youth of twelve ? The truth seems to be that many doctrines must be received by age, middle age, and childhood alike, as matters of simple, unquestioning faith."*

This defence of the Faith will, it is to be feared, prove neither edifying nor satisfactory to those for whose benefit it was more especially intended. Apart from the context, the words recall the bitter irony of

¹ See *Monthly Paper of Nat. Soc.* for Sept. 1869, p. 149.

Gibbon, and the cold scepticism of Hume. Is not the view put forward by this writer in the *Monthly Paper*, equivalent to asserting, that the Church has no rational and intelligible *explanation* to offer touching the cardinal doctrines of the Trinity and Baptism? Will it not be alleged, and not without apparent reason, by the enemies of the Christian Faith, that, under such circumstances, confessions of faith are nothing but empty words, and that those who repeat them are like so many parrots?

To accept mere humanly devised forms of doctrine with "unquestioning faith"—what is this but to consider their framers as so many Popes, and thus, under another guise, to adopt the very principle of the Papacy—believe, because the Church thus teaches?

To admit, *in an age like the present*, even by implication, that the Church possesses no *intelligible* doctrine of the Divine Trinity, is virtually to surrender the first principles of the Faith to the enemy. The sooner the rulers of the Church become fully alive to the extreme importance of this plain fact the better and happier will it ultimately be for all concerned.

It is but just to observe that if the "Religious Education" received by this Oxford graduate were of a similar character to that here given by his critic in the *Monthly Paper*, it cannot be matter of wonder that the unhappy Oxonian, on whom his adviser in spiritual things kindly bestows a little rebuke and some pity, should still complain that "the religious

instruction which he received at school and at college was scanty, and has had little, if any, influence on either his faith or practice."¹ Will he not, in all probability, when he considers the character of the complaint and the remedy offered, call to mind the well-known lines :—

“Arma diu senior desueta trementibus ævo
Circumdat nequicquam humeris, et inutile ferrum
Cingitur, ac densos fertur moriturus in hostes.

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget:”

That the commonly received interpretation of the Creed is not only erroneous, but of pernicious consequence to the Christian faith, must be admitted by all who have impartially studied the subject. The fairest and most Christian course under such circumstances, seems to be, in the first place, the modification and improvement of our own theological opinions, previous to entering upon the responsible work of making changes in ancient and widely received formularies. The difficulties and incongruities in the current conceptions of things spiritual and Divine, grow every day more apparent. The difficulties must be fairly and openly met; the incongruities—when fully proved to be such—frankly and promptly acknowledged, and as far as possible, removed. Crude and imperfect conceptions of things

¹ See *Monthly Paper of Nat. Soc.* for Sept. 1869, p. 149.

spiritual belong to man. They form intrinsically no part of a Divine Revelation. Their true origin is the biassed reason and the evil will of man. Until they are removed, the Divine light cannot enter : the Sun of Righteousness must remain in more or less dim eclipse.

To the radical errors everywhere prevalent as to the *doctrines* intended to be taught by the Athanasian Creed, are mainly due the present profoundly critical state of Christendom. The alternative which seems daily forcing itself with increasing urgency on the Church at large, is not whether this or that form of faith and worship is to be retained or accepted ; but whether Christianity itself is, *in any form*, to hold its ground in the so-called Christian world ; or to be utterly destroyed, as to its spirit and its power, under the combined influence of superstition and atheistic naturalism. Is there to be such a thing as definite Christian doctrine, capable of being *rationaly* taught and understood ; in other words, is there to be a Church or no Church ?

A Church without definite and intelligible doctrine, *as the rule of heavenly life*, suited to the state of thought and feeling required by the age—is a Church which has ceased to be a *living and teaching Church*. Whatever its pretensions may be, it has no longer the power of fulfilling the functions of that office to which it was at the first appointed by its Divine Lord—that of “making disciples of all nations.” To teach mankind the truths of the

Divine Word as the supreme law of the inner and heavenly life, is the special function of a real and living Church.

“Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for ourselves ; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not.”

A blind and *unconscious* repetition of doctrinal summaries must inevitably tend to deaden the higher moral sense, and becloud the intellectual vision, with which man has been endowed, for the perception of things spiritual and heavenly. This is too plain to need proof. When, on the other hand, expositions of the Christian Faith, embodying genuine spiritual truths from the Living Word, are presented in such a form that the intellect is able to grasp their meaning, and thus bring “the hidden man of the heart” ever so imperfectly into real living *conscious contact* with the contained truths ; such expositions may be compared to the hem of the Lord’s glorious garment of Divine Light : and when touched, if one may so say, by the hand of a living and intelligent faith, spiritual—yea Divine virtue goes out from them. For then there is a harmony of faith and reason. Truth is seen in its own heavenly radiance. There is, in some sort, an actual communion with heaven, the native abode of all Truth.

If the teaching of the Church is to be believed and *practised*, it must be shown, on proper and sufficient evidence, to be *true*—intrinsically reason-

able, in the highest and purest sense. No appeals, however subtle and eloquent, to a blind and unreasoning faith, will much longer suffice to prop up the crumbling superstitions of past ages. The old arguments and persuasives which once sufficed to establish and perpetuate popular religious convictions, have no longer any influence on the great mass of intelligent men. We breathe an entirely new scientific, moral, intellectual, and religious atmosphere. New and unexpected lights have broken in upon the human mind, filling it with wonder and delight. The true character of numberless phantoms of the imagination, which in every region of human research had held undisputed sway as real existences—has now been laid bare. A *blind* faith in the supernatural is no longer possible. The numerous and wonderful revelations of science have, so to speak, furnished new eyes to the understanding, and cleared the intellectual horizon far and wide. The purely fictitious character of what may be termed the Papal paradise, becomes more apparent every day; and the way is being silently and surely prepared for a true and exalted recognition of *the supernatural*—the transcendent perfection of its order, and the all-pervading character of its laws.

The time is approaching when a complete readjustment of current theological views will be, to some extent, possible. For many a century the teaching of the Churches has been, on the highest

subjects of human thought, miserably in disaccord with reason and fact,

It is, indeed, a comparatively easy task to discover faults and imperfections in theological systems. To reject manifold and absurd errors, as soon as discovered, needs no great exercise of self-denial. It is, however, by no means so easy to do all this, and at the same time, *save the truth* which for ages has lain buried under a mass of errors and counterfeit truths.

To make the crooked places of the human understanding straight, and to make plain the rough places, thrown up age after age in the path of the true intellectual and spiritual life of man, by the wild and lawless forces of evil human passions—this will be the work of future ages. But “who is sufficient for these things?”

It is at the present day more than at any previous time in the world’s history, possible to make at least ever so small a beginning in this process of renovation. The strangely disordered state of the religious, and also of the non-religious world, gives indications not to be mistaken, that all such efforts, if made on true and solid principles, and advanced in a just and candid spirit, are sure of obtaining, in some quarter or other, due consideration.

It is clear that the Christian faith must now be maintained and spread by new arguments, and *new expositions of its first principles*. The old modes of defence, like the old conceptions, are fast becoming

obsolete. Once more, as in the old time, the dead must be left to bury their dead. An entirely new effort must be made by all who love truth in sincerity, to welcome its advent from every quarter, and in every form.

What was deemed abundant evidence, by a simple-minded Christian, to establish the truth of his faith, in the Apostolic times, no longer avails to satisfy the hard and inflexible demands of the "free inquiry" so characteristic of this and the preceding century. Clearer conceptions of what in reality constitutes the *standard* of Christian faith and practice, and of what ought to be accepted as trustworthy *criteria* of theological truth, must be forthcoming, if the true Christian Religion is to make any *real progress* among the mass of mankind. The foundations on which a *supernatural* Revelation rests, must be investigated anew. Spiritual truths must be placed before the mind in a new aspect, and arranged in a fresh order. The ordinary conceptions of Divine Revelation must be thoroughly *revised*. The earnest religious consciousness must be placed more in harmony with certain definite, well-established modern ideas, which, for their novelty, depth, and grandeur, may reasonably be regarded as the undoubted harbingers of a new intellectual and religious age.

The path of sound theological opinion in the Church is beset by two obstacles of giant magnitude. There is, on the one hand, a desolating Tritheism, and

the phantasms to which it necessarily gives origin ; and on the other, a naturalistic Atheism, the subtle poison of which induces on the mind into which it finds an entrance, stupefaction and torpor touching things intellectual and spiritual. The *remains* of Christian truth and life in the Church can be saved only by the revindication and reassertion—in a form adapted to the new state of thought—of the foundation doctrine of her worship, A DIVINE TRINITY IN THE ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD.

It would, indeed, be a "blessed good," if the Athanasian Creed could be shown to be fairly and legitimately susceptible of a rational and Scriptural interpretation ; if it could be evinced that, for the most part, the thick cloud of mystery in which the Doctrine of the most holy Trinity in the Godhead has hitherto been involved, has been of man's making, and belongs not at all to Divine Revelation. The *Scripture doctrine* itself has hitherto been confounded—chiefly through the fault of the clergy—with the *scholastic figment* which has usurped its name and place.

It has, indeed, been suggested in the Upper House of Convocation, that the clergy should more frequently put before their congregations the *true meaning* of the Athanasian Creed. How is this excellent and much needed counsel to be followed ? Where is the authoritative and true exposition to be found ? In an earnest and able Letter on the *use* of the Creed it is confessed, that beyond certain bare

statements, it is inexplicable ; but it is averred, notwithstanding, that the Church warns a man that he is in a *perilous state* unless he worship One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity ; and that "life or death depends on our having a right faith."¹ Now mere statements such as these, are, to say the least, dangerously ambiguous. They tend to injure the cause they are meant to serve. From a Scripture point of view, they are true or false according to the sense in which they are taken. To be of any real use they require full *explanation*.

Even the learned and systematic treatise of Dr. Waterland will be found, on examination, to be totally inadequate to meet present difficulties ; whatever good service it may have rendered in the last century, as against the subtle and not over-ingenuous efforts of the Arianising party, led on by Dr. Samuel Clark.

To permit the use of "qualifications" in the interpretation of the Creed, will be found of little avail, unless it be first clearly determined what those qualifications are, and on what principle they are to be made.

An *adequate* exposition is still needed. The Creed must be rendered intelligible, or "got rid of." There appears to be no other alternative. By one party it is believed in implicitly and blindly ; and, moreover,

¹ See *A Letter to his Parishioners on the Use of the Athanasian Creed*, by Walter Farquhar Hook, D.D., pp. 27, 28.

is taught in a form which directly tends to produce a denial of Christianity in thoughtful minds. By another and a rapidly increasing party, it is regarded with coldness and suspicion: its retention in the Prayer Book a most unpleasant subject of reflection, and its public recital an intolerable burden. By some, who are supposed to dwell on the border-land of the Christian Church, it is denounced in terms inconsistent with decent manners, generous feeling, and theological insight, as "bad theology, bad morals, and bad sense."

In any permanently useful effort made with a view to adapt the terms of the Creed to the clear and express teachings of THE WORD, a real breadth of mind and largeness of heart are required. A reverent regard must, first of all, be shown by the expositor, for the habits of mind and modes of thought prevalent in the Primitive Christian Church, as compared with the complex and sharply defined ideas on every subject which are so characteristic of modern times. It should not be forgotten by certain over-zealous Church reformers, that all teaching, in order to be useful, must be suited to the capacity and condition of the learner. Such has been the *Divine* mode of instruction in every age. The various Dispensations were adapted, both in language and in form, with infinitely wise condescension, to the times in which they were given. The Apostles were sent forth to "*teach* all nations," in an age of comparatively simple and unreasoning faith. They were

filled by the Lord's Spirit, in a manner, and to a degree, perfectly suited to the accomplishment of their arduous and sacred functions. Centuries passed away ; and the state of the Church, both within and without, became entirely different. Clergy and laity alike, as is well known, began by degrees to lose their simple, primitive, child-like, and obedient faith in their Divine Lord ; and, at the same time, that love for one another, which was pre-eminently the mark of the early believers, waxed cold. This calamitous change soon prepared the way for those reasonings, strifes, and persecutions, which occupy so large a space in Ecclesiastical History ; and which remain the standing opprobrium, as well as the ground for a righteous condemnation, of that form of Christianity *which has a name that it lives, but is dead*. Not only corruptions of doctrine, but enormities of life, everywhere prevailed. In due time, as a matter of necessity, came the Reformation. One of the first and highest—in fact the only truly permanent of the many results of that remarkable movement—was to set the DIVINE WORD for ever *free*, and to render it, to a large extent, the common property of the people. Christian Europe soon entered upon the enjoyment of a liberty in spiritual things it had never before known. An entirely new, and, in some respects, perilous path was opened to the Church. Every department of human learning assumed a new aspect. The character of thought and speculation touching the origin and nature of the mate-

rial universe, and the laws by which it is governed, rapidly underwent an essential change. New and wonderful facts were constantly being brought to light. New principles were carefully and laboriously deduced from these facts. A new order of *ideas* was disclosed by the ascent of the human mind to the clear and distinct cognition of *general physical laws*. The ordinary crude and superstitious conceptions prevalent respecting natural phenomena began rapidly to disappear. By the genius and industry of "seekers after truth," the deep foundations of Astronomy and Terrestrial Physics were securely laid. Anatomy, Physiology, Botany, and Geology, with kindred departments of scientific investigation, revealed, in due course, their marvellous treasures in rich and varied abundance ; and at the present hour, proceeds apace, the building up of the majestic Temple of Science.

It was inevitable that this wondrous, ever-increasing, stream of *new ideas*, which has been silently and steadily pouring its treasures into the great sea of modern thought, should sooner or later produce some mighty *change*. It was impossible, amid all these revolutions of thought and opinion, that the ideas embodied in the Creeds should have escaped criticism. It was inevitable that the technical language in which these ideas were expressed, should come to be felt as inadequate, and thus should give occasion for misconception and error. Accordingly, a fierce internal conflict has long been going on

between the old conceptions and the new, in the highest regions of human speculation. The respective spheres of science, philosophy, and theology, are now in mutually negative and repulsive states. In each of these departments, indeed, there are indubitable facts. What is wanted is that *true bond of union*, whatever it be, which connects these facts one with another. There exist in each, fundamental principles which cannot be called in doubt, except by violating the acknowledged laws of legitimate thinking. There is much needed, however, a revelation of the *true order* which subsists between them, as well as a method by which they can be rationally *co-ordinated* and *subordinated*.

In the confusion produced by the antagonism which has arisen between these three different classes of cognitions, there is a danger of all first principles being extensively called in question ; and of a rapid retrogression to something like that insane "sensational philosophy," which was the precursor of the French Revolution.

Theology, unhappily, appears most of all in danger. The Church seems ill prepared to meet the difficulties which menace her on every side. The *deficiency* noted by Lord Bacon still exists ; and no systematic attempt has, from his day to the present, been made by the clergy to supply the want, viz. "the true limits and use of reason in spiritual things as a kind of *Divine dialectick*." The arduous and complex problem now before the Church, is how

to distinguish between false and true conceptions of *the everlasting facts and principles* of the Revealed Word of God; and how to teach spiritual truths in a *rational form*. Were she intelligently, faithfully, and ardently, to unite her learning, piety, and love of truth, in the attempt to solve this problem as best she could, the partisans of "free thought" and the discoverers of so-called "new affinities of faith" would soon be made aware of the numberless profound and difficult theological problems, which, on their own *professed* principles, they would justly be called upon to consider; and of the thorny controversies which must arise, before the Christian religion shall be entirely surrendered, to be torn in pieces by a ruthless criticism and a naturalistic Atheism.

CONDEMNATORY CLAUSES.

WITH the view of meeting, to some extent, the difficulties felt concerning the Creed in general, and the condemnatory clauses in particular, the expedient of an explanatory Rubric has been suggested. Now were it even possible to construct one, such as that recommended in the year 1688, which should prove acceptable to the majority of the clergy for the time being ; still, it would prove in time to be only a postponement of the difficulty which must ultimately be openly encountered by the Church. The present state of opinion on the subject renders this sufficiently plain. The difficulty can be fully and permanently overcome, only by some definite, intelligible, and, if necessary, detailed explanation of the *language* in which the formula has been expressed.

A feeling of bitter hostility to every phasis of *definite* doctrine has spread with astonishing rapidity, of late years, among a certain class of professing Christians. Now, nothing is more easy than to show the suicidal character of the arguments, so much in favour with such persons, in behalf of the *absolute and unconditional* abolition of all Creeds and "condemnatory clauses." To place the real question at issue in a

clear light, so as to procure for it a fair consideration, demands a complete and thorough-going investigation of the doctrine of Scriptural, as distinguished from "Ecclesiastical," *anathemas*. For ages the grossest errors have prevailed on this most solemn subject, originating in the wicked spirit of priestly domination, and forming the most valid excuse that can be offered, for the *excessive* hostility of honest scepticism to truth revealed from Heaven. The anathemas hence arising—not to speak of the diabolical evils which have followed in their train—merit the most entire and hearty reprobation of all mankind.

It is, moreover, not to be forgotten, that "condemnatory clauses" are by no means confined to the Athanasian Creed. They exist elsewhere in other more subtle and hidden forms. The members of every sect and party, however liberal in profession, do, in their own peculiar way,

"Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to."

It will be found by no means an easy matter for a consistent believer in the Christian religion to get rid entirely of the doctrine of *spiritual condemnation*. The Word of God does, beyond all doubt, contain A DOCTRINE of *rewards and punishments in the future life*. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ;

they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”¹ It is plain from these words that to deny the doctrine of spiritual condemnation absolutely, is only another form of rejecting the continuous teaching of Holy Scripture. From beginning to end it abounds in denunciations, against the wilful and obstinate evil-doer, in language of astonishing variety, power, and expressiveness—using figures in the highest degree calculated to excite in the minds of those who believe in THE WORD, emotions of the profoundest awe and horror. The only consistent opponents of a *Scriptural* doctrine of condemnation, are those who refuse to accept any form or modification of the Christian Faith. With such, divine revelations of heaven and hell are words without meaning. In their view, there is nothing in man either to save or to condemn.

On the ground of Holy Scripture it may be laid down as one first principle of a true theology, that “*there is no nation in the whole world which salvation may not ultimately reach, provided they acknowledge, in some form, a Divine Being; and live according to that light of conscience with which they have been endowed.*” The redemption of mankind was *universal*. All men, without exception, are born with a *faculty* by virtue of which they are enabled to live not merely a natural life, like the beasts that

¹ St. John v. 28, 29.

perish ; but also, to some extent, a spiritual life, while in this world ;—the prelude to one more perfect and complete in the native home of all true and good men—the spiritual and eternal world. In virtue of this faculty man is man, *immortal* : and, if he will use it aright, is capable of receiving, through *some* channel, the benefits of this universal redemption. If through his own fault he “neglect so great salvation,” he cannot escape the everlasting consequences. Thus the XVIII. Article is seen to involve a profounder truth, and is of incomparably wider Scriptural application, than, in all probability, its framers intended. It is a universal principle of the Christian Faith that “Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the NAME of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.” This principle applies to the Gentile as well as to the Christian world.

The following propositions, bearing on this subject, will doubtless be admitted, as axiomatic in theology, by all but fanatics :—

- i. The mere knowledge of any truth, however sacred, does not *of itself* conduce to salvation or spiritual health.
- ii. The mere unavoidable ignorance of any truth, or *mere error*, does not condemn.
- iii. It is *goodness* in will and act—according to the amount and quality of the light within—that saves.
- iv. It is *evil*—wittingly and obstinately pursued both in will and in act—that condemns.

It is, moreover, to be well noted, that the Divine *law* of salvation, as also of spiritual excommunication and condemnation, is thus declared in words of infinite Wisdom :—

“He that is not *with me* IS AGAINST ME : and he that *gathereth not with Me*, SCATTERETH.”¹

These are the inwardly and obstinately wicked, under whatsoever form they may appear.

“He that is *not against us* IS ON OUR PART.”²

These include the good and true, according to their light and ability, all over the world ; no matter to what race or religion they may outwardly belong.

Both divisions of mankind are fully and intimately known only to Him who knows *what is in man*.

These principles at once make clear the genuine Scripture doctrine of the “condemnatory clause,” and furnish a refutation of the objections which have been made to it, owing to popular misinterpretations of its meaning, scope, and use.

There is implied, indeed, in the arrogant and exclusive ecclesiastical condemnations of weak and fallible men, a spirit of cruelty and wickedness—a want of common humanity—which, by the law of Christian charity, deserves the strongest condemnation, not for the *error* which it displays, but for the *evil spirit* which it evinces. “For,” as has been well

¹ St. Luke xi. 23.

² St. Mark ix. 40.

said, "no man can know the *exact amount* of the various good qualities, evil propensities, and divine graces, which in their union and totality form the *spiritual character* of this or that soul. God alone knows this."¹

The Divine Law, then, is abundantly clear in the Holy Word: but the absolute *application* of it, is a prerogative exclusively belonging to God alone.

Again: the declarations of the Creed—whether given with more or less accuracy in terms of Holy Scripture, or in plain and evident inferences from them—are carefully to be distinguished from the various and ever-changing notions of interpreters from age to age. The Creed is not fairly chargeable with erroneous or perverse interpretations. The gist of the question under consideration lies in the discovery of those fundamental *ideas* of Scripture doctrine, which are involved in the *language* of the Creed, and which were intended to be taught as clearly and fully as the character and circumstances of a primitive Age would permit.

There can be no doubt that the very doctrine contained in the words, "And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be*," is taught in a multitude of different forms throughout Holy Scripture. The perversion, however, to which this Divine Truth became subject from a very early period in the Church, seems

¹ *Guy's Scale of Perfection*, p. xxi.

in these days of comparative enlightenment, freedom, and inquiry, almost incredible. Take, for example, the case of the unbaptized. The following are a few of the shocking opinions entertained upon this subject by some of the most pious and eminent theologians of the early Church :—

“Such children,” says Gregory Nazianzen, “as die unbaptized, without their own fault, shall neither be glorified nor punished by the righteous Judge, as having done no wickedness,” &c.

Severus, Bishop of Antioch, says, that “if children die unbaptized, without partaking of the laver of regeneration, they are certainly excluded from the kingdom of heaven.”

St. Augustine declares that “children dying without baptism are under condemnation, though theirs be the mildest of any other.”

One of the most abominable forms in which this truly detestable and inhuman notion has been taught, has Fulgentius for its author, who says :—

“It is to be believed, without all doubt, that not only men who have come to the use of reason, but infants, whether they die in their mother’s womb, or after they are born, without baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are punished with everlasting punishment in eternal fire ; because, though they have no actual sin of their own, yet they carry along with them the condemnation of original sin from their first conception and birth.”

“Out of the [Catholic] Church,” says Bossuet,

“there is nothing but damnation and death ; and all those who separate themselves from the community of the faithful to make a sect apart, ought not to hope for salvation.”

It is unnecessary to pursue this appalling manifestation of human error and weakness further than to add, that even the enlightened, liberal, and comparatively tolerant Reformers of the Anglican Church did not venture to pronounce an opinion in a matter so plain as that of the future condition of infants dying unbaptized.

It is not to be wondered at, that thoughtful men in all ages, free from the toils and trammels of false religious systems, should recoil with horror from notions like the foregoing, and reject with loathing that holy religion, which, as they ignorantly supposed, inculcated such detestable doctrines. Christianity is not, however, in anywise accountable for these enormous errors. The Word of God, when fairly and consistently interpreted, teaches, without doubt, that *every man may be saved whatever his religion may be*. It teaches openly, that of such as are *like* little children, is the kingdom of heaven : that is as much as to say—*all infants*, born of what parents soever, dying as infants ; and all who, in the course of their lives, have been enabled by the Divine blessing to preserve intact a remnant of this childlike state of innocence, go to heaven. It also teaches—in terms which cannot, with impunity, be denied or evaded—that if the light of Christian truth be placed

within reach of any man, and if he love darkness rather than light *because his deeds are evil*, he is necessarily and inevitably condemned. In truth he condemns himself.

The Scripture doctrine of the condemnatory clauses cannot, then, be tampered with, by a *faithful* Christian Church, in order to suit the requirements of a flimsy, superficial, sentimental theology. It is an everlasting law of divine order that "he that doeth evil *hateth* the light," and that "he that doeth truth *cometh* to the light;" and that "he that believeth on the SON hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the SON *shall not see life*; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him."¹ Objections to the condemnatory clause, as thus explained, are either superficial and irrelevant; or else they are objections to expressly revealed truth—objections to declaring "*all* the counsel of God." There is a spirit abroad—among the worst and most ensnaring—to which *smooth speaking* and *prophetic deceits* are by no means uncongenial; which regards with comparative indifference the most sacred and awful of all subjects; which is offended even by the idea involved in the Divine saying—"shall not see life." The objection, then, to the genuine doctrine of the condemnatory clause, turns out to be an objection to the most positive and express teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

¹ St. John iii. 20, 21, 36.

According to the continuous and repeated testimony of Holy Scripture, from beginning to end, there exists a most intimate and indissoluble *connection* between genuine belief and salvation ; and also between wilful, determined, hardened unbelief, and condemnation.

The Divine purpose in creating man was that he might lead a good life here, according to the light and ability given him, as an indispensable preparation for introduction to a never-ending life of happiness hereafter. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." What is termed in Scripture language "the wrath of God," however it may be understood or explained, "cometh on the children of *disobedience*."

Man has the power, granted to him at every moment by the Lord, of *compelling* himself to conform, more or less perfectly, to this merciful end ; or of allowing himself to act in wilful opposition to it. In other words, man is endowed with the faculty of spiritual freedom. When a man acts so as to render possible the accomplishment of this divine end, he is *saved* : when he acts so as to thwart it, he becomes spiritually *dead*, *i.e.* eternally lost. The two forms of speech mean essentially the same thing. These statements of Holy Scripture are not to be regarded as figures of speech, to be used in the way of pious frauds, or as the mere common-places of sermon-writers to frighten people into becoming good. They are revelations of spiritual and

eternal *facts*—the most momentous and terrible which man can conceive ; and with the full clear significance of which, no right-minded true-hearted teacher of Christianity will allow himself to tamper.

The truth of the above *Scriptural*—and not the common ecclesiastical—doctrine of the condemnatory clauses, will, therefore, be assumed throughout in the following analysis of the Creed.

ANALYSIS.

The Athanasian Creed, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, consists of forty-four distinct clauses.

Of these, Clauses I., II., XXVIII., XXIX., XLI., and XLII., are condemnatory. The XLI. differs somewhat in character from the other five, and teaches, in the simplest language and with the utmost clearness, what has ever been regarded as one of the most essential and vital doctrines of the Faith—rewards and punishments in the future life, according to the character and quality of “the deeds done in the body.”

It would appear, then, that there are *two different kinds* of condemnation contained in the Creed—one relating rather to faith, the other to life. Now since true Christian faith and life are inseparably *one*, it is reasonable to suppose that the framer or framers of this symbol never intended that these two kinds of condemnation should be interpreted

in opposing or discordant senses. One ought to harmonise with the other, and both with Holy Scripture.

The Doxology (Clauses XLIII. and XLIV.) may be passed over with the remark, that, as *one form* of confessing the doctrine of the Divine Trinity, it cannot be at fault as to its *mere terms*. It is apparently the most universal—but for this reason the most indefinite—formula in which the Trinal distinction in the Godhead can be expressed. Its introduction, in the recital of the Psalms, may fairly be regarded as providential; constituting, as it does, a simple and sublime confession of the Christian's belief in the *fact*, that the doctrine of the Divine Trinity in the Godhead is, in some manner, contained in the Old Testament as well as in the New.

The remaining thirty-six clauses pertain specially to *doctrine*. Sixteen of these—that is, from the III. to the XVIII. inclusive—declare, in general terms, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity.

Clauses XIX. and XX. may be termed dogmatic statements, the ambiguous character of which will be considered in what follows. Six clauses—from the XXI. to the XXVI. inclusive—set forth the Trinity in Unity and the Unity in Trinity in a more specific form. Clause XXVII. may be considered an authoritative or preceptive exhortation.

Next in order come two of the condemnatory clauses already noticed above—one referring to the

exposition of the Trinity which precedes, the other to the statement of the Incarnation which follows.

The doctrine of the Incarnation is given in eight clauses, from the XXX. to the XXXVII. inclusive.

The XXXVIII. teaches the passion, burial, and resurrection of our Lord.

The XXXIX.—His ascension into glory, and His future coming to judge the world.

The XL.—Man's resurrection, and his future responsibility for the life he has lived while on earth.

The XLI.—The Divine judgment—the unspeakable happiness of the good, and the miserable lot of the wicked, in the world to come.

The XLII. declares a *faithful* belief¹ in the Catholic Faith to be an essential condition of obtaining salvation.

The general doctrine of the Creed may be thus stated in a compendious form :—

I. In so far as the everlasting Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed to a man by true and faithful preaching, or by any other providential means, he is responsible for the *use* made of the light which he has received. If, through his own deliberate choice, following upon the promptings of

¹ This clause is, of course, to be understood as referring to those only to whom the Faith has been made known.

his own evil desires and tendencies, *he turns the light within him into darkness*, then he incurs, inevitably, the penalty of everlasting condemnation in the eternal world.

II. This Gospel—that is to say, the Christian Faith—reveals the Being of the One living and true God, in whom there is a Divine Trinity.

III. It also lays open the eternal reciprocal relations which subsist between this One Divine Being and His human creatures; as involved in the Divine works of Creation, Redemption, and Regeneration.

IV. Finally it declares that—*inseparably bound up* with these awe-inspiring and, in many respects, mysterious relations, by the eternal and irrevocable laws of *Divine Order* and *Providence*—there remains for every man at last the inevitable issues of never ending bliss or misery.

Such are the universal principles of Christian Doctrine which may, by a fair and legitimate interpretation, be deduced from the Athanasian Symbol. The document itself cannot justly be held accountable for the various ignorant, inadequate, false, or perverse interpretations of it, which, to the great scandal and deep injury of Christendom, have so long prevailed in every section of the Church.

Such principles as the above cannot be called in question, without peril to the foundations on which all Revealed Truth rests. They are, in general terms,

the teaching of the entire Word of God, and of all its parts, when seen and understood according to their true rational and spiritual connection. In the light of this teaching the Creed may be seen to be in accordance with *the truth*.

Two pre-requisites, however, are absolutely necessary in order to obtain a full and adequate view of the whole subject. The sense in which the terms "*Divine*" and "*Person*" are used throughout these pages, must be strictly defined and thoroughly understood.

Christians of every name confess that God is infinite and eternal. It follows, then, that nothing can be predicated of God but what is Infinite and Eternal. What is Infinite in itself and Eternal in itself, *this*, and this alone, is DIVINE.

Again: the term "*Person*" is one of the most equivocal in all Theology; and the evils arising from the misconception and abuse of it, have proved most disastrous to the cause of Divine Truth. It may be said, in general, to have two distinct senses. The one is technical; and as employed by theologians ancient and modern, is most ambiguous. Its exact signification has never yet been clearly stated. The other is the proper, true, rational, and intelligible meaning. In the first or technical sense, it has been used as equivalent to—hypostasis, *suppositum*, substance, subsistence, "somewhat." In the second sense it means simply—a human being, A MAN. In this its well-known acceptation it cannot, in strictness of speech, be predicated of the Father or of the Holy

Spirit, but only of the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is God *and man*, that is to say, GOD-MAN, or a DIVINE-HUMAN PERSON.

It may be necessary, also, to explain briefly the sense in which the terms "essence" and "essential" are here used. Without going into subtle distinctions, as between *Esse* and *Essentia*, let it suffice to say, that *one thing* can have only *One Essence*. *Essentials*, or those things which pertain to the one essence of any thing, may be general or particular. All the essentials, taken together, constitute the *one Essence*. The three general *Essentials* of every man, for example, are soul, body, and the united *working* of both. In like manner, in the ONE GOD there are three—and only three—general *Essentials*; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The term "essential," used in relation to Deity, has evidently a transcendent and purely *Divine* meaning, inasmuch as the subject of which it is predicated is Infinite and Eternal, that is to say, DIVINE.

Bearing in mind then the simple facts, that the term "Person" in its *technical* sense is equivalent—as used in the Creed—to the term *Essential*, as above explained; and that the same term "Person," according to its ordinary and well-understood acceptance, can with strict propriety of language be predicated only of the Lord Jesus Christ—and even of Him, in its transcendent and *Divine* sense, only in reference to His Glorified Humanity, as THE DIVINE MAN—the comprehension of the Athanasian

Creed is possible, and even easy, to any mind of ordinary education and intelligence ; as may be clearly perceived from the following brief Interpretation :—

PART I.

THE CREED.

I. Whosoever will be saved : before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith.

INTERPRETATION.

Whosoever has been brought within the sphere of Gospel light, and is minded “to repent,” “to enter into life,” “to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling ;” the one thing needful, is that he not only confess with his lips, and acknowledge in heart and life, but that he also retain his hold on, *the Christian Faith*, unto the end of his earthly life. “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.”¹

THE CREED.

II. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled : without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

INTERPRETATION.

For if a man do know this faith, and nevertheless do live, deliberately and obstinately, a life which is contrary to its divine precepts and requirements ; and if by so living, he weaken, violate, and at length profane that *Divine Truth*, which constitutes the

¹ St. Matt. x. 22.

Light of Conscience within him, then without doubt—as a consequence of the irreversible operation of those eternal and unchangeable laws of DIVINE ORDER according to which man was originally created, and apart from which he could not in anywise be man—he shall perish everlastingly: inasmuch as good and evil, truth and falsity, are as eternally opposite as Heaven and Hell. He can have no abode in Heaven, because, during this life, Heaven has had no abode in him.

THE CREED.

III. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.

INTERPRETATION.

And the Christian Faith is this; that we worship one God in whom there is a threefold Essence, or a Trinity, and also this Trinity, in the One God: and the one God, in whom there is this Trinity, is ONE PERSON, *in the sense above explained*; and the Trinity which is in this One God, constitutes and is ONE ESSENCE. Thus, it may be seen that there is one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.

THE CREED.

IV. Neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance.

INTERPRETATION.

Thus understood, neither are the Essentials of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit confounded, nor is the Essence of the One God divided.

THE CREED.

V. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son : and another of the Holy Ghost.

INTERPRETATION.

The Trinity which is in the Lord, as One Divine Person, is the following :—

- (1.) The *Divinity*, which is called the Father ;
- (2.) The *Divinity*, which is called the Son ; and
- (3.) The *Divinity*, which is called the Holy Spirit.

THE CREED.

VI. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all One : the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

INTERPRETATION.

But the Divinity, or Divine Essence of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is ONE ; the Glory and the Majesty one and the same, from everlasting to everlasting.

THE CREED.

VII. Such as the Father is, such is the Son : and such is the Holy Ghost.

INTERPRETATION.

Such as is the Divinity which is called the Father, such also is the Divinity which is called the Son, and such is the Divinity which is called the Holy Spirit.

THE CREED.

VIII. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate : and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

INTERPRETATION.

As the Divinity in the Lord—which is called the Father—is uncreate; so the Divine Humanity—which is called the Son—is uncreate: so also, the Divine Proceeding—which is called the Holy Spirit—is uncreate.

THE CREED.

IX. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible: and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

INTERPRETATION.

As the Divinity in the Lord—which is called the Father—is infinite; so the Divine Humanity—which is called the Son—is infinite: and so also the Divine Proceeding—which is called the Holy Spirit—is infinite.

THE CREED.

X. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

INTERPRETATION.

As the Divinity—which is called the Father—is eternal; so the Divine Humanity—which is called the Son—is eternal: and so also the Divine Proceeding—which is called the Holy Spirit—is eternal.

THE CREED.

XI. And yet they are not three eternal: but one eternal.

INTERPRETATION.

And yet these three *together* are one eternal; because the Lord is one God, both in ESSENCE and in

PERSON, in whom there is the Divine Trinity, as above explained.

THE CREED.

XII. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated : but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

INTERPRETATION.

As also there are not three infinities, nor three uncreated ; but one uncreated, and one infinite : because the Lord is one God, both in ESSENCE and in PERSON ; in whom there is the Divine Trinity, as previously shown.

THE CREED.

XIII. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty : and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

INTERPRETATION.

So likewise the Divinity in the Lord—which is called the Father—is Almighty ; the Divine Humanity—which is called the Son—is Almighty : and the Divine Proceeding—which is called the Holy Spirit—is Almighty.

THE CREED.

XIV. And yet they are not three Almighties : but one Almighty.

INTERPRETATION.

And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty ; because the Lord is one God, both in ESSENCE and in PERSON, in whom there is the Divine Trinity.

THE CREED.

XV. So the Father is God, the Son is God : and the Holy Ghost is God.

INTERPRETATION.

So the Lord—from His own proper Divinity which is called the Father, from His own proper Divinity which is called the Son, and from His own proper Divinity which is called the Holy Spirit—is ONE GOD : since the three which are Divine, and called by the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are—in the Lord—ONE IN ESSENCE AND IN PERSON, in the sense already stated.

THE CREED.

XVI. And yet they are not three Gods : but one God.

INTERPRETATION.

Thus, in the sense above-mentioned, they are not three Gods : but one God.

THE CREED.

XVII. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord : and the Holy Ghost Lord.

INTERPRETATION.

So likewise the Lord—from His own proper Divinity which is called the Father ; from His own proper Divinity which is called the Son ; and from His own proper Divinity which is called the Holy Spirit—is ONE LORD : inasmuch as the three which are Divine, and are called by the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are—in the Lord—ONE IN ESSENCE AND IN PERSON.

THE CREED.

XVIII. And yet not three Lords : but one Lord.

INTERPRETATION.

Thus, according to the tenor of this explanation, they are not three Lords, but ONE LORD.

THE CREED.

XIX., XX. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity : to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord ; so are we forbidden by the Catholick Religion : to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.

INTERPRETATION.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity, in accordance with what is set forth in Holy Writ, to acknowledge a Trinity in the Lord, and each Essential to be, of itself, Divine, and all three taken together to be *distinctly* ONE ; so we are forbidden by the Divine Commandment, to think of *three* Gods and to confess *one*. And, moreover, inas-much as we acknowledge a Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, IN THE LORD ; so we are able—in accordance with the Christian verity, and therefore in obedience to the teaching of the Christian Faith and Religion—to say, *with the lips and from the heart*, that there is but ONE GOD and ONE LORD.

PART II.

THE CREED.

XXI. The Father is made of none: neither created, nor begotten.

INTERPRETATION.

The Divinity of THE LORD, which is called the Father, is made of *none*: neither created, nor begotten.

THE CREED.

XXII. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten.

INTERPRETATION.

The very and proper DIVINE HUMANITY, which is called the Son, is of the Father *alone*; neither made, nor created, but begotten.

THE CREED.

XXIII. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

INTERPRETATION.

The very, proper, and DIVINE PROCEEDING, which is called the Holy Spirit, is of the Father, *and of the Son*; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

THE CREED, AND INTERPRETATION.

XXIV. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost [or Spirit], not three Holy Ghosts [or Spirits].

XXV. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other : none is greater, or less than another.

XXVI. But the whole three Persons [or Essentials] are co-eternal together : and co-equal [in the DIVINE HUMAN PERSON of the Lord Jesus Christ.]

XXVII. So that in all things, as is aforesaid : the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, [that is, as *three Essentials* in ONE DIVINE-HUMAN PERSON,] is to be worshipped.

From the above explanations, it may be abundantly evident that the Athanasian doctrine is in agreement with the aforesaid truth, that the Triune God is ONE, not only in essence, but also in person, provided only that instead of "three persons," *in the common acceptation of the term* (which would involve manifest Tritheism), be understood *three Essentials*—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in the DIVINE HUMAN PERSON of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Trinity, thus taught, and explained, can and ought to be worshipped by every member of the Church ; for it may be proved by manifold indubitable proofs, from all Holy Scripture—Old Testament as well a New.

THE CREED.

XXVIII. He therefore that will be saved : must thus think of the Trinity.

INTERPRETATION.

He therefore that is minded to enter upon and keep in the path of spiritual safety revealed by

infinite Love and Wisdom ; and to preserve, amid false Christs and false prophets, a true and living faith, let him thus think of the Trinity, and strive to live in accordance with this faith.

PART III.

THE CREED.

XXIX. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation : that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

INTERPRETATION.

Furthermore it is necessary to the existence and perfection of the true spiritual Christian life, that a man also believe rightly the INCARNATION of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first, verimost, essential of the Church—without which there can be no genuine and permanent progress in the heavenly life—is the acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ as the GOD AND SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, *whereby we must be saved.*”¹

THE CREED.

XXX. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess : that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.

¹ Acts iv. 12.

INTERPRETATION.

For the full and perfect idea of the Incarnation—without which, in days of decaying faith and life, the Church must ultimately perish—is, that the Humanity of the Lord is DIVINE from the Divinity which was in Him from conception. Here, however, it is absolutely necessary for the understanding of the Creed, to distinguish (1) between what refers to the Humanity, in so far as it was derived from the Virgin Mother, which may also be called the infirm Humanity, (*state of exinanition*), and (2) between what is spoken of the Humanity from the Father, in which the Lord was after He had entered into His own glory, (*state of glorification*). This latter state is everywhere termed in the exposition here given, the Divine Humanity. In this DIVINE-HUMAN FORM, the Lord *possesses* all power in heaven and on earth—He is said to have “ascended far above all heavens that He might *fill all things*”—He is *ὁ παντοκράτωρ*—He is “the only wise God our Saviour”—He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords—the I AM—the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End—the Almighty.

As soon as this primary and essential distinction is clearly understood, then the apparently contradictory statements of this part of the Creed, at once become lucid, and full of deep meaning.

It is to be particularly noted, that this part, which treats specifically of the Incarnation, contains two distinct and different series of statements—one relating

to the Lord's state of *humiliation and exinanition*—the other to His state of *victory* over the "powers of darkness," and His consequent *glorification*. In any attempt to understand the present subject, it is of the first importance to grasp firmly, and bring to clear consciousness, this distinction well described by the two expressions—*forma Servi*, *forma Dei*.

It may be stated, in general terms, that Clauses XXXI., XXXII., XXXIII., and XXXV. refer to the infirm Humanity—*forma Servi*; and XXXIV., XXXVI., XXXVII., describe specifically the glorified Humanity—*forma Dei*.

THE CREED.

XXXI. God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world.

INTERPRETATION.

GOD, of the Infinite and, therefore, *indivisible* ESSENCE of the Father, begotten—not in any natural, but in a transcendent supereminent Divine sense—before the worlds: and—with respect to the Humanity born in time—*Man*, of the *nature* of the mother, born in the world.

THE CREED.

XXXII. Perfect God, and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

INTERPRETATION.

God, the only self-subsistent Being—supremely

perfect : Man in reality and truth, according to the laws of His own Divine Order, in this lower world ; born as another man—like, yet *infinitely unlike*—that He might take upon Him the iniquities and evils of the human race, and conquer them, and thus save mankind. In no other way could this Divine end have been accomplished, but by His thus assuming a “rational soul and human body of flesh.”

THE CREED.

XXXIII. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead : and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood.

INTERPRETATION.

ONE with the Father, as touching the Divinity which was in Him from eternity—“I and the Father are *one [thing]* : and inferior to the Father, or the Divinity within Him—previous to the glorification—as touching the maternal humanity, and its hereditary evils, derived from the *virgin mother*. “My Father is *greater than I*.”

THE CREED.

XXXIV. Who although he be God and Man : yet he is not two, but one Christ.

INTERPRETATION.

Who, although he be Divine and Human in one DIVINE HUMAN form—that is GOD-MAN : yet He is not two beings or “persons,” but one Christ, or Messiah, *in One Divine Person*. “I am the LORD

thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but ME: for there is *no* SAVIOUR beside Me."¹ "O LORD, my strength [my rock], and my REDEEMER."² "They drank of that *spiritual Rock* that followed them: and that Rock was CHRIST."³

THE CREED.

XXXV. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into God.

INTERPRETATION.

One DIVINE-HUMAN PERSON; not by conversion of the eternal and unchangeable Divinity into flesh, that is, into a mere human body; but by glorifying or making *Divine* the Humanity, from and by the indwelling Divinity: a glimpse of which all-glorious form the three disciples were permitted to see—with a certain holy ecstatic awe and love—on the mount of Transfiguration, when THE LORD showed to them His DIVINE HUMAN FORM—"and was *transfigured* before them: and his face did shine as the Sun, and his raiment was white as the light."⁴

It would appear that some copies of the Creed read thus:—"He is one: yet not that the Divinity was changed into Humanity, but the Divinity took up the Humanity into itself." This reading, as well as that of the text, is in agreement with the truth; inasmuch as the soul, as is well known, does not

¹ Hos. xiii. 4.

² Ps. xix. 14.

³ 1 Cor. x. 4.

⁴ St. Matt. xvii. 2.

change itself into the body, nor is commingled with the body, so as to become, as it were, *that body*. It *assumes to itself* a body. So that although the soul and the body are most distinct, still, *together* they constitute *one man*—and when the subject of predication is the Lord—*One Christ*, that is, one infinite DIVINE MAN, who is GOD.

THE CREED.

XXXVI. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance : but by unity of Person.

INTERPRETATION.

The Lord is, to a supereminent and Divine degree, entirely, completely, perfectly ONE—not by confusion or commingling of the Divine Essence with the infirm Humanity derived from the nature of the virgin mother; but by a transcendently exalted and glorious *union* of the infinite Divinity with a *corresponding* DIVINE-HUMAN FORM. He is thus, in the sense of the term already explained and so frequently referred to, ONE PERSON.

THE CREED.

XXXVII. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man : so God and Man is one Christ.¹

INTERPRETATION.

For as the rational soul and its own proper body

¹ Clauses xxxviii. to xli. inclusive, forming Part IV. of the Creed, present no special difficulty, and are here passed over for the sake of brevity. Should circumstances seem to demand it, they may be included in an Exposition of the Apostles' Creed, on a future occasion.

constitute one man, in one person; so the Divinity, invisible and ineffable in itself—as *a soul*; and the Divine Humanity—as *the body proper to that Divinity*, and the only true and adequate *revealer* of it—constitute the one Christ, or GOD-MESSIAH, as well of the Old Testament as of the New—in one DIVINE-HUMAN Person.

Here a subject presents itself deserving the profoundest and most conscientious study of all who love truth for its own sake. This clause contains the very kernel and life of the Athanasian Symbol. As soon as the understanding has once grasped, clearly and fully, this foundation-truth of Christianity, then it will discover that it has received power over the “serpents and scorpions” of all the false theology to which the misinterpretation of this very formula itself has given origin.

“The Athanasian Creed,” says the author of the *Essay on Development*,¹ “may admit the illustration of soul and body, and later Fathers discountenance it.” The illustration in question, however, cannot be dispensed with, except by annihilating the one condition under which the Creed can be made of the least use as a vehicle of Christian Doctrine. The “later Fathers,” with the utmost respect be it said, cannot be listened to in this case. The Creed itself *involves* the illustration. The doctrine of the Incarnation, as revealed in Holy Scripture, can in no wise

¹ P. 354.

be understood apart from it. It is the highest, most perfect, and most necessary to be known, of all illustrations by which a true and adequate idea can be conceived of God, *as He has been pleased to reveal Himself to man*—and any other leads at last to the belief in an “unknown God.” Yea, more: the time has fully come when a profound study of the almost ignored problem of the *soul and the body in their mutual relations*, has become for theology, in the present connexion, an absolute necessity. A psychology, at once philosophic and Christian, is manifestly among the most urgent needs of the Church in these days. A materialistic so-called philosophy is endeavouring to trample down natural philosophy and theology together, in the dust and rubbish of a gross materialism. Speculations concerning the “origin” and “nature” of man—which commence anywhere but at *the beginning*; and everywhere confound *man* with the mere *body, shell, trunk*, of man—are becoming more and more *brutish*. This epithet is used not in an offensive, but in a strictly literal and Scriptural sense. The *right employment of the rational faculty* is gradually passing away from amongst an instructed class of men who are too exclusively given to the cultivation of the natural sciences. A not inconsiderable part of the intelligence of modern Europe has become well-nigh dead, for all the purposes of an impartial and enlightened investigation into the source and character of things

intellectual, spiritual, and Divine—a study which is the highest, the most humanising, the most ennobling, the most glorious, of all the studies in which the mind of man can engage.

This article of the Creed is true, in a far deeper sense than even the Père Ventura intended, when he said that, “Toute la science intellectuelle et religieuse est renfermée dans cette grande parole de Saint Athanase : ‘Comme l’âme rationnelle et la chair ne font qu’UN HOMME, de même le Dieu et l’homme ne font qu’UN JÉSUS CHRIST’ : *sicut anima rationalis et caro UNUS EST HOMO, ita Deus et homo UNUS EST CHRISTUS.*”¹

It, is, however, deeply to be deplored, that the very religious system, to which the Reverend Père is so devoted, is itself a principal cause of the hostility which at present so widely prevails amongst educated men in Roman Catholic countries, not merely against this Creed, but against every form of a supernaturally revealed Religion. It is not difficult to foresee, that the day is rapidly approaching when this incredulity will become still more general ; when “the merchants of the earth”—the Papal Hierarchy—“shall weep and mourn” over the destruction of modern Babylon, “for that no man buyeth her merchandize any more,”—that mass of arbitrary rights which may most fitly be called merchandize, consisting of “Dispensations derived from the *power of the keys*—the

¹ Vide, *De la vraie et de la fausse Philosophie*, p. 69.

remitting of sins even of an enormous kind, and exempting persons thereby from temporal punishments—using influence with the Pope to allow marriages to be contracted within the forbidden degrees—transferring privileges within their jurisdiction—receiving gratuities, both general and particular, from Monasteries—misapplying revenues which others have a right to”—and many other things of a similar kind.

The *chief* of all doctrines is that which this clause of the Creed was intended, in Divine Providence, to keep alive in the Church and perpetuate—that JEHOVAH, *the Being of beings*, is to be worshipped in His Humanity, that is, in the GOD-MAN, the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Christian Church was founded on this principle of worship. The *Son of God* and the *Divine Humanity of JEHOVAH* are expressions which mean precisely the same thing. To understand the terms *Son of God* and *Son of Man* as equivalent to Son of Mary—which is commonly done throughout the several churches of Christendom—is to lose the Scriptural idea of the Lord's Divinity, and to prepare the way for Judaism, Arianism, Socinianism, Calvinism, and finally the worship of Nature.¹ Our Lord *was*, indeed, the son of Mary, after a miraculous manner: but by passing from the *state of humiliation* to that of *glorification*, He was no longer the son of Mary, but became

¹ The elucidation of the above all-important principle in the science of Theology demands a special treatise.

in the fullest and most perfect degree the SON OF GOD—or JEHOVAH in a Divine-Human form.

The dogma of the Pope's Vicarship, among other causes, has well-nigh entirely obliterated this palmary doctrine of the Christian Faith. In the denial of it was involved, from the very beginning, the essence of the Arian heresy. The doctrine of this clause—although not declared with rigorously scientific precision, in an age of simple faith and comparative ignorance—was *in fact* the foundation doctrine of the Primitive Church. Again, at the time of the Reformation, when THE WORD was set free and studied with sincerity and diligence, in the face of Papal error and usurpation, this forgotten doctrine once more was brought to light. The great Luther, with his characteristic courage, honesty, and zeal, bore witness to this Divine Truth. Bossuet's remarks, in relation to Luther's doctrine of the *Ubiquity* of the Lord's Humanity, are well worthy of attention in relation to the present subject.

“There was no error so monstrous, into which the heat of dispute had not impelled the passionate mind of Luther. It made him embrace that monstrous opinion of ubiquity. These are the arguments on which he grounded this strange notion. The humanity of our Lord is united to his divinity; therefore, the humanity as well as the other is everywhere; Jesus Christ, *as man*, is seated at the right hand of God; the right hand of God is everywhere, therefore, Jesus Christ as man is everywhere. . . . Luther . . . maintains that this body was necessarily in every place; that is what he taught in a book . . . which he wrote in 1527, in order to defend the literal sense, and what he ventured to insert in a

'Confession of Faith,' which he published in 1528, under the title of 'The great Confession of Faith.'"¹

Now it may be convenient for an advocate of the Papal religion to call this highest and most sacred of all doctrines "monstrous:" but it will be found that the *proof* given of it by Luther, in his sturdy, open, common-sense way, is substantially irrefragable.

Nor did the assertion and maintenance of the doctrine pass away with Luther. It is clearly set forth, so late as the year 1756, in the *FORMULA CONCORDIÆ* of orthodox Protestantism. It is therein taught in the following forms:—

In Christ the Divine and human natures are so united, as to make *one person*.² Christ is Very God and Man *in one individual person*, and remains so for ever.³

In Christ God is Man, and *Man is God*.⁴

The *human nature* of Christ is exalted to all Divine Majesty, as proved from many of the Fathers.⁵

Christ as to his human nature is *omnipresent*, and fills all things.⁶

Christ as to his human nature *has* all power in heaven and in earth.⁷

Christ as to his human nature sits at the *right hand* of God.⁸

¹ Vide, *Variations*, vol. i. p. 84. Ed. Dublin, 1836.

² *Form. Concord.* pp. 606, 762. ³ Pp. 609, 673, 762.

⁴ Pp. 607, 765. ⁵ Pp. 844—852, 860—865, 869—878.

⁶ Pp. 768, 783—785. ⁷ Pp. 775, 776, 780. ⁸ Pp. 608, 764.

Christ *is to be prayed to*, as to his human nature, proved by many quotations from Scripture.¹

Let it be well understood, then, that this is not an altogether *new* doctrine. Its existence, and transcendent excellence, have, in modern times especially, been almost entirely overlooked by the Church. It contains, however, *the only remedy* for the latent Arianism and Tritheism which have been preying upon the very life of the Church since the time of the Nicene Council. It is a doctrine known, and yet not known. It is generally denied when presented in clear categorical terms even by those who *implicitly* admit it when they believe in the doctrine of a Real Presence of our Lord in the Holy Supper. It is also admitted implicitly, when, according to the modern form of Arianism, at present so popular in the Anglican Church, prayers are addressed to our Lord as *the Head* of the Church by those who confess that His *humanity* is no other than that of a mere man, and not in any proper sense DIVINE.

Now it is absolutely essential to the existence and perpetuity of the Christian Church, that the true and proper Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ be fully, openly, and without reserve acknowledged in it—not as a mere dogma, or speculative tenet—as the chief doctrine, but because without such acknowledgment, a direct, conscious, *personal* conjunction of the *mind* with God is in no wise possible. Such con-

¹ Vide, *Form. Concord.* p. 226.

junction can take place only from and in our Lord. This is evident from His own words:—"No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *declared him*." ¹ "Ye have neither heard his voice nor seen his shape."² "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever *the Son will reveal him*."³ "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but *by ME*."⁴

It is well known how these Scripture truths are explained away by various methods and devices. All explanations are fairly allowable, even when most inadequate and erroneous, provided the *facts* be left entire. Now the above passages declare with abundant clearness *the fact*, that in the act of worship it is not possible for God and man to be "in spirit and in truth" joined together otherwise than in and by the Divine-Human Person of the Lord. There is, moreover, a *reason* for this in the very eternal order of things: and this reason has also been revealed. It may be thus stated. The Father is *in* the Lord; and they are—not two equal unanimous Gods—but ONE DIVINE BEING. Only in a single passage of Holy Scripture does it seem, that the request was ever openly made—"Shew us the Father." The answer, at once given, is clear and definitive. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I

¹ St. John i. 18.

² Ibid. v. 37.

³ St. Matt. xi. 27.

⁴ St. John xiv. 6.

been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known ME, Philip? He that hath seen ME *hath seen the Father*. Believest thou not that I AM in the Father and the Father in ME."¹ "I and the Father are one" [Being].²

The Father is *in*—not *out of*—the Lord; the Lord and the Father are thus ONE BEING, therefore, ONE PERSON, in the strict and proper sense of the term. The so-called "hypostatic union" of two "natures" is a human scholastic figment, which has no authority from God's Word; but, on the contrary, in so far as theologians have succeeded in explaining what they mean by it, is manifestly repugnant to Holy Scripture and right reason.

It is to be noted, moreover, that the idea of three distinct "Persons" constituting the Divine Being (as commonly understood), and the idea of one God—cannot possibly co-exist in the same mind. The one, of necessity, expels the other. If the lips *confess one*, the mind is nevertheless *thinking of three*. If, however, the term *Person* be taken in the sense given in this explanation—that is, according to its ordinary acceptation, as signifying *a man*—then it is possible to have *together* in the mind, *at the same time*, an idea of the Divine Being as a Trinity of *essentials*, and an idea of these three essentials as existing in one DIVINE-HUMAN PERSON. God is thus *one*, yet *three in one*. According to this view alone

¹ St. John xiv. 8—10.

² Ibid. x. 30.

is it possible, on this highest and most sacred of all subjects, for human speech and thought to be perfectly *in unison*.

The quarter whence danger to the welfare of Christianity is most to be apprehended, the special form of deadly error which now threatens the Church of England, is that which pertains to this doctrine of the Lord's Divine-Human Person. There are active tendencies at work in various directions, under different names, and in diverse theological interests, all favourable to the resuscitation of the Arianism of the last century, and to the permission of the open teaching of the prevalent Socinianism within the fold of the Anglican Church. Events are rapidly hastening the solemn public discussion of the Arian or Socinian hypothesis. Is the Church prepared to enter upon a work so arduous and momentous?

Such a discussion involves a reconsideration of the *First Principles* of Christian Theology. The success of Socinianism will be, as a matter of course, the utter ruin of the Church. For that hypothesis contradicts the central fact of the conception of the Lord's Humanity, from the very and essential Divinity itself. It contradicts the philosophical truth, that the body of every man is the *effigies* of its own proper soul, and of none other. It contradicts the fact of our Lord's resurrection, *with his entire body*, in a manner different from that of all other men. It leaves out of view what was actually revealed—much more what was *involved*—in that wondrous

revelation on the Mount of Transfiguration, when the Lord's face shone, on the opened spiritual eyes of His disciples, as with all the splendour of the noon-day sun. It takes no note of the apparently simple, but in reality stupendous, revelations which the Lord has expressly made of Himself throughout the entire Word; and also of the DIVINE relations which they all, without a single exception, involve. It is incompatible with obedience to the precept that *faith* is to be directed to HIM, in his Humanity, as its only *intelligible* object. It denies the truth that He is *one* with the Father. It knows nothing of his glorification, in a transcendent Divine sense. It denies that He *possesses* all power in Heaven and on earth. It altogether ignores the primary truth of all Revelation—that in all His relations towards man the LORD is *essentially* Infinite, Eternal, Divine. It thus implies the destruction of all Scriptural spiritual theology. It completely closes the *inner understanding*; and by so doing, enables those who adopt it thoroughly, "to read the Bible like any other book" with an accuracy fatal to all *spiritual* discernment.

This idea, then, of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ as a Divine-Human Person, is pre-eminently the noblest, the purest, the most exalted, the most influential for good, that the human mind by its highest reach can ever conceive. It *conjoins*, really and consciously, the Infinite and the finite, the Creator and the creature, as the ray of light connects

the eye with the sun. It serves to lift, in part, the veil of that *inner world* which has been so fully revealed, and yet is so dimly discerned, in Holy Scripture. It is there, for example, manifestly declared, in numerous places, that the Advent of our Lord into this world was, in some way or other, necessary to the welfare and even continuance of the human race. Redemption was in a certain very real sense a *continuation of Creation*. It would not be too much to say, that Creation was not perfected in its inner and higher aspects until after the Incarnation. By this His marvellous and most merciful manifestation—His life, passion, and crucifixion—all of which were in their origin and character stupendous and most glorious miracles—works purely Divine—He “shewed strength with His ARM,” and overcame the Prince of this world, the spiritual enemy of every man that comes into it. In achieving this victory over what is called, in the symbolical language of the Apostle, the “prince of the power of the air—the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,”¹ He, at the same time, “*entered into His own glory*,” and thus became, in and by His Divine-Human Person, for all eternity, the PRINCE OF LIFE. By this fuller manifestation of His Being and glory, He was pleased to provide for the endowment of His creatures, in all future ages, with higher spiritual powers and susceptibilities, and a new spiritual

¹ Eph. ii. 2.

freedom; thus enabling them, with a new energy and success, to wrestle "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."¹ This victory over the powers of spiritual darkness, this glorification of His *human* Essence and Form, was effected by means of temptations, the mysterious and dread character of which was revealed to man only in part, under the veil of the letter—temptations which He endured in that infirm humanity derived from the virgin mother. *This alone could be tempted.* The Divinity, as such, cannot be tempted in any wise. These temptations were overcome, by successive steps, continually unto the end. THE PASSION OF THE CROSS was the last and direst temptation; but it was also the full, perfect, and eternal victory.

This WORK—altogether Divine, and incapable of being accomplished, in even one of the very least of its parts, by any other than GOD INCARNATE—is the unique mean, to all eternity, of man's redemption and salvation. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the SPIRIT OF CHRIST which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand *the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* Which things *the angels desire to look into.*"²

¹ Eph. vi. 12.

² 1 Pet. i. 10—12.

Thus was revealed to the Church, for all ages to come, the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ—"the TRUE GOD and eternal life."¹

To be ignorant of this revelation from no fault of one's own; to be unable to receive it owing to causes beyond one's control; and to reject it, because of "*an evil heart of unbelief*;" imply three different states of man's spiritual life, which are by no means to be confounded. Only in the last-mentioned case can the awful words apply in all their depth of meaning—"He that believeth not THE SON shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him."² Of all other human beings in whom there is still left a trace or remnant of true humanity which the world, the flesh, and the devil, have never been able to pervert or destroy—of all such it may be said, with equal certainty—whoever they may be, or by whatsoever name they may be called—in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: "He that *overcometh* shall inherit all things: and I will be his GOD, and he shall be *my Son*."³

¹ 1 John v. 20.

² St. John iii. 36.

³ Rev. xxi. 7.

CONCLUSION.



IN the preceding pages an attempt has been made to sketch, in rough and faint outline, the more prominent features of what is likely to become the great theological question of the future. The writer is but too well aware of the imperfect manner in which the subject has been treated ; and trusts that the intrinsic importance of some of the views indicated, as well as the present critical state of theological opinion in the Church, will in some degree justify the plainness of speech which he has not scrupled to employ, in the endeavour to bring face to face with what is called the liberal theological and scientific opinion of the day, the truths of faith which, it is believed, an ancient, venerable, but little-studied summary of Christian Doctrine may, by legitimate interpretation, be shown to contain.

It would perhaps be vain to hope that the exposition here given, of what is so generally regarded as an inexplicable theological formula, should attract much notice in a busy and pre-occupied age like the present. Nor even if it should, is it likely to be

understood without that close and continuous attention which the very character of the subject requires, and which is seldom given except by those who are thoroughly in earnest in their quest of truth.

Not only are Creeds and confessions of the Christian Faith, like so many other institutions in the present day, on their trial ; but, unhappily, to a serious extent, even Christianity itself. There is, indeed, no ground for apprehension as to the final triumph of the Church in the future. The DIVINE WORD cannot fail as to one jot or tittle. There is, however, just cause for grave anxiety lest our own country, like others both in the present and in past times, should prove unfaithful to its sacred trust, in allowing the lamp of revealed Truth to be gradually extinguished within it, through a selfish or worldly indifferentism.

The issues now before the Church may be briefly summed up in the two following :—

i. Is our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, in his Glorified or Divine Humanity, the supreme and the only *revealed* object of religious worship ?

ii. In the Books of the Old and New Testament, does the Church possess, in any genuine and intelligible sense of the term, *the supernaturally-revealed* WORD OF GOD ?

The English mind is, indeed, peculiarly averse to

religious controversies. The present and kindred subjects in consequence have, with rare exceptions, long been avoided as much as possible; but the march of events is tending to force their consideration upon the mind of the Church. The whole subject of *Fundamental Theology* must at no distant period be approached with the utmost frankness, on every side. The controversy, in the last resort, will perhaps be found to lie mainly between those who do, and those who do not, believe the WORD OF GOD. The questions at issue involve no less a struggle than that between the True Christian Religion and Atheism. The extreme forms of Papal superstition and scientific unbelief, when traced to their real source, are seen to be merely two different but closely related forms of Nature-worship. Scientific naturalism regards *Man* as a mass of moving matter, not as a spiritual and immortal being, placed for a time in intimate relation with a material organism of stupendous structure. The devotees of saint-worship, as evinced by the attempt to define as a dogma the *bodily* assumption of the Virgin Mary, would seem to consider heaven to be a receptacle of "dust and ashes." Extremes meet.

The course of the world's history has placed for solution before the Christian Church, problems of the greatest magnitude and difficulty. A crisis has come. The Everlasting Gospel stands in the presence of a new and hitherto unimagined order of thought and speculation. Now, more than at any previous period

in the history of the Church, does it behove "every scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven" to bring forth "out of his treasure *things new and old*"—to do what he may to present once more *the old* that appears ready to vanish away, in an altogether renovated and attractive form, and to bring to light, from a deeper and more intense study of the Word, *the new*, of which it is an inexhaustible treasure-house—and this in such a manner as to show the inherent harmony, the essential oneness of the *new*, with all that is old and true—all that is in itself unchangeable and eternal. The "dead letter" must give place to the *living spirit*. Much that has hitherto appeared to many as the *obvious meaning* of Divine Revelation, is destined, in the light of the Word itself, to be subjected to a searching analysis, and shown to be only a *fallacious appearance*. And the inner, the genuine, sense of Holy Writ will doubtless be eliminated by the aid of just, legitimate, and spiritual principles of interpretation; so that heavenly truth may be seen and set forth in clear intellectual light.

As to those who, from whatever cause, may be led to consider what has been here advanced on a question of supreme moment in theology, the following sentiments, taken from the writings of the profoundest thinker of the Primitive Church, may not perhaps be deemed altogether irrelevant:—

"Sane cum in omnibus litteris meis non solum pium lectorem, sed etiam liberum correctorem desiderem, multo maxime in his, ubi ipsa magnitudo quaestionis

utinam tam multos inventores habere posset, quam multos contradictores habet. Verumtamen sicut lectorem meum nolo mihi esse deditum, ita correctorem nolo sibi. Ille me non amet amplius quam catholicam fidem, iste se non amet amplius quam catholicam veritatem. Sicut illi dico, Noli meis litteris quasi Scripturis canonicis inservire, sed in illis et quod non credebas cum inveneris incunctanter crede, in istis autem quod certum non habebas, nisi certum intellexeris, noli firmiter retinere : ita illi dico, Noli meas litteras ex tua opinione vel contentione, sed ex divina lectione vel inconcussa ratione corrigere. Si quid in eis veri comprehenderis, existendo non est meum, at intelligendo et amando et tuum sit et meum : si quid autem falsi conviceris, errando fuerit meum, sed jam cavendo nec tuum sit nec meum.”¹

¹ St. August. De Trinit. Lib. iii. § 2. (Ed. Bened.)

THE END.



